

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 006

CE 060 640

AUTHOR Konrad, Abram G., Ed.
 TITLE Everyone's Challenge. Proceedings of the Literacy Conference (Edmonton, Alberta, October 9-12, 1990).
 INSTITUTION Alberta Univ., Edmonton. Faculty of Education.
 REPORT NO ISBN-0-88864-931-2
 PUB DATE 91
 NOTE 92p.
 AVAILABLE FROM Adult, Career, and Technology Education, University of Alberta, 633 Education South Bldg., Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5 (\$10.00).
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adult Students; Educational Improvement; Educational Needs; *Educational Research; English (Second Language); Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; *Instructional Materials; *Literacy Education; Minority Groups; Program Implementation; Second Language Instruction; *Teaching Methods; Visual Impairments
 IDENTIFIERS *Canada; Freire (Paulo)

ABSTRACT

The following presentations are included in this report on conference proceedings: Conference Opening (Joyce Fairbairn); Greetings (John Gogo); Special Address (Ramon J. Hnatyshyn); "Paulo Freire on Adult Education," an interview and panel discussion (Carlos Torres et al.); Keynote Addresses (Jonathan Kozol, John Gogo, Peter Calamai, Frank Ogden); "Effective Programs for Adult Literacy Instruction" (William T. Fagan); "The Computer Curriculum Corporation Instructional System" (James R. Mellan); "Using Peer Response Groups in ESL (English-as-a-Second-Language) Writing Classes" (James H. Bell); "Literacy for the Blind and Visually Impaired" (Doris Goetz); "Prepackaged Formats or Participatory Approaches?" (Michael Collins, Jody Hanson); "Consumer Talk: Materials for Development of Literacy Skills in a Consumer Context" (Beth Jenkins, Gail Baron); "The Reluctant Learner: Reasons for Nonparticipation and Dropout among B.C. (British Columbia) Adults" (Audrey M. Thomas); "Evaluation of ABL/ABE (Adult Basic Literacy/Adult Basic Education) and Workplace Literacy Programs" (Kathryn Barker Chang); "Journeys: How Learners and Community Members Run Their Program" (Avril Chartrand, Kathleen Walsh); and Conference Closing, Synthesizer's Report (Gordon Selman). Appendixes provide biographical data on the keynote speakers, list the members of the conference organizing committee, and include the schedule and 60 conference session summaries. (KC)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED343006

Everyone's Challenge

Proceedings of

The Literacy Conference

Edited by
Abram G. Konrad

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A.G. Konrad

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



**Everyone's Challenge:
Proceedings of
The Literacy Conference**

*Edited by
Abram G. Konrad*

University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Literacy Conference (1990 : Edmonton, Alta.)
Everyone's challenge

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-88864-931-2

1. Literacy—Congresses. 2. Literacy—
Canada—Congresses. I. Konrad, Abram G.
II. University of Alberta. Faculty of
Education. III. Title.

LC149.L58 1990 374'.012 C91-091461-3

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in
any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior
permission of the copyright owner.

Typesetting:
Publication Services, Faculty of Education
University of Alberta

Printed by:
University of Alberta Printing Services

Copyright © 1991
Faculty of Education
Adult, Career and Technology Education
University of Alberta

Contents

Foreword	iii	Prepackaged Formats or Participatory Approaches? Relevant Options and Strategies for Adult Literacy Practitioners	
Conference Opening		<i>Michael Collins and Jody Hanson</i>	56
Hon. Joyce Fairbairn, Senator	1	Consumer Talk:	
Hon. John Gogo	3	Materials for Development of Literacy Skills in a Consumer Context	
Right Hon. Ramon J. Hnatyshyn	4	<i>Beth Jenkins and Gail Baron</i>	59
Keynote Addresses		The Reluctant Learner:	
Paulo Freire on Adult Education: An Interview and Panel Discussion	5	Reasons for Nonparticipation and Dropout Among B.C. Adults	
Jonathan Kozol	14	<i>Audrey M. Thomas</i>	61
Hon. John Gogo	23	Evaluation of ABL/ABE and Workplace Literacy Programs	
Peter Calamai	27	<i>Kathryn Barker Chang</i>	63
Frank Ogden	36	Journeys: How Learners and Community Members Run Their Program	
Selected Workshop Sessions		<i>Avril Chartrand and Kathleen Walsh</i>	65
Effective Programs for Adult Literacy Instruction: The L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program		Conference Closing	
<i>William T. Fagan</i>	44	Synthesizer's Report	
The Computer Curriculum Corporation Instructional System		<i>Gordon Selman</i>	68
<i>James R. Mellan</i>	47	Appendices	
Using Peer Response Groups in ESL Writing Classes		A. Keynote Speakers	71
<i>James H. Bell</i>	51	B. Conference Organizing Committee	72
Literacy for the Blind and Visually Impaired		C. Schedule at a Glance	73
<i>Doris Goetz</i>	54	D. Conference Program	74

Foreword

The International Year of Literacy was a year of many conferences around the world, but for almost 1000 of us **The Literacy Conference**, October 9-12, 1990 in Edmonton, was the event for launching the decade of literacy. Volunteers, learners, educators, researchers, business and industry representatives, and government members gathered together to examine literacy issues, share experiences and ideas, celebrate new initiatives, and identify plans for future developments. We laughed and we cried; we applauded and we criticized; we celebrated and we mourned—as our awareness of literacy issues increased and as we learned about participatory, cooperative ventures designed to raise the standards of literacy in our communities.

Everyone's Challenge: Proceedings of The Literacy Conference provides some of the features of a stimulating experience. For most, the highlight of the conference was the challenging exposure to the featured speakers in the plenary sessions. A special thanks to our guests who inspired us by sharing their personal experiences in a colourful and passionate manner. The workshops allowed many of us to "roll up our sleeves" and grapple with specific concerns as we participated in discussions of particular interest. Unfortunately, only a small sample of the workshop presentations are contained in this publication. To all who came to share their ideas in these sessions, we express our appreciation.

It was of especial significance that the conference was dignified by the Right Honourable Ramon Hnatyshyn, Governor-General of Canada, Honourable Joyce Fairborn, Senator of Canada, and Honourable John Gogo,

Minister of Alberta Advanced Education. We applaud their public commitment to literacy, and we anticipate evidence of their dedication in new public policies and program initiatives.

To all who supported the conference—the Alberta and federal governments, corporate donors and over 25 publishers and book retailers, Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, Edmonton's Further Education Council, ACCESS Network, Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, the University of Alberta and, especially Alberta Vocational College—we express our deepest gratitude. Without the hours of service of countless volunteers this conference would not have been a success. A particular acknowledgement to Pat Fahy and the other members of the Steering Committee for their tireless efforts to organize **The Literacy Conference**. We are also indebted to the services of the University of Alberta in preparing these proceedings—especially Karen Villeneuve, Georgianna Kwan and Gerry Kendal.

Finally, to Gordon Selman, our synthesizer, we offer our appreciation for pulling it together for us, and for challenging us to "go on in hope," making concrete plans for our own involvement in next steps. All of us have learned a great deal about the work being done to increase literacy in our communities and in other parts of the world; may each of us commit ourselves anew to help many learn to "read the world" in this decade of literacy.

Edmonton
October 1990

Abram G. Konrad
University of Alberta

Conference Opening

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn, Senator

I would be grateful if you could convey to our fellow literacy crusaders my profound regret and sadness that I am unable to be with you tonight to open this historic conference. Many in the audience will know that the fight for literacy in Canada has become a motivating force in my work in the Senate, in Alberta and in the country.

Only extraordinary circumstances would prevent me from being on this stage tonight. All Canadians have witnessed an unprecedented explosion in the Senate of Canada caused by unprecedented actions surrounding the GST. There are principles involved which are fundamental to our parliamentary system, and that is why I must remain in Ottawa.

This conference is undoubtedly one of the major literacy gatherings in our country during International Literacy Year. Among you are representatives of every aspect of the literacy issue, including the most important of all—the learners. The inclusion of all elements of this very large constituency of concern in itself points directly to the path ahead if indeed we are to move successfully forward on this issue.

This conference occurs also at a critical time. Because of the focus on the International Year, our country has heard and seen more about the problems and opportunities of literacy than at any time in our history. Tremendous efforts have been made to tell Canadians that this issue is hurting our country, our fellow citizens, our children and their future. Efforts have been doubled and redoubled by literacy organizations, community projects, educators and the dedicated army of volunteers which continually keeps the battle alive in every community in this country. Governments at every level have increased their commitments; business has begun to accept the reality of the threat against its own productivity; and labor has been initiating innovative efforts to help and support Canadians in the workforce.

An uncomfortable issue, a perplexing issue, a deeply debilitating issue has been forced onto the national agenda. And as 1990 draws to a close, we must forcefully and candidly begin to ask the questions and take the action that will keep literacy on that agenda. Where do we go from here? Are the commitments of a single year strong enough to last a decade and beyond into a new century? Although all of us have been motivated by the activity of 1990, are Canadians truly aware of the literacy issue and ready to translate that awareness into polit-

ical pressure which is essential to maintaining and accelerating government activity and financing?

How do we take all of the ideas, surveys, programs and wisdom accumulated in the past three years and clearly articulate the priorities that will lower the horrendous statistics and bring millions of Canadians in from the sidelines of our national life so they can be a productive part of the solution? After all, we are talking of more than one third of our adult Canadians who can barely cope with everyday reading, writing and numeracy tasks which we take for granted. And as these citizens expend their energies in trying to hide their problem and survive, they remain in private isolation—frustrated and sad; often afraid and angry—in a world in which success and fulfillment depend so heavily on communication at every level of our society. If this were a communicable disease it would be declared an epidemic. There would be an emergency national action campaign across this country to cure the adults and prevent the spread in children.

Literacy is everybody's issue, but all too often it is nobody's issue. It respects no boundaries, be they geographic, constitutional, or political. It moves freely among all social classes, ages, and races and religions. And yet I suggest to you that in spite of all our best efforts this year a great number of Canadians remain unaware, sceptical or unmoved by this issue.

So we must keep fighting for a national awareness program. We must systematically use the power of television and radio to demystify illiteracy. Through public knowledge, we can build the acceptance needed both to offer significant help as well as to encourage those suffering from the problem to come forward and seek that help. We must show a generosity of spirit among all our levels of government that would enable them to build bridges across constitutional jurisdictions, instead of settling for second best or less in our attempt to promote a national solution. Yes, education is a provincial responsibility, but literacy is a national imperative.

We know from the excellent surveys by the Southam News organization and Statistics Canada that there are great holes and blind spots in our education systems which allow our children to slip through without ever developing a firm foundation in the fundamentals of basic literacy skills. If one third of our adults with functional literacy problems are high school graduates, and another one third of our teenagers drop out of school each year, there is clearly something wrong in our education process. In spite of these concerns, we seem to

lack the courage and the necessary motivation to challenge seriously an entrenched system which is not responding adequately to a critical need in our current circumstances.

In the workplace where, ultimately, these problems build beneath the surface, we join with other western nations in facing a severe problem of renewal. In the next 20 years it is estimated that the population in North America will grow at a slower rate than in any period since the depression of the 1930s. The age level of the work force will rise and the number of young people entering the workplace will decline. By the year 2000 85% of the Canadian workforce will consist of adults who are in that workforce now. If the literacy problems which affect an estimated one out of every six workers today are not addressed by cooperative effort, they will be more deeply and desperately entrenched as we enter the new century.

Finally, we must take a hard look at the youth of our country and the environment in which they are learning—an environment in which over a million children in Canada live below the poverty line despite the lavish consumption and accumulation of wealth surrounding us. Scratch the condition of illiteracy and often you find poverty, fear, hunger, homelessness, exhaustion,

discrimination, abuse—mental, physical, sexual—all of which effectively block or dull normal learning patterns. We simply cannot afford, as a nation or as individuals, to allow an underclass to solidify in Canada which will ultimately erode the capacity and the soul of this country to reach its economic, social and cultural potential.

These, then, are the challenges ahead for our country as it tries to come to grips with a problem that cannot be isolated simply under the headline of literacy. In reality, literacy pervades every other problem. And it is only through strong partnerships between every level of our social, political and community structures that we can lead the way to maximum literacy in Canada. No country with our wealth, creativity and compassion can ignore this challenge and this opportunity. It is a matter of will, both individual and national.

In this room tonight there is an incredible pool of experience, excellence, skill and devotion. I know that the discussions of the next few days will add a major contribution to the people of our province and our country. I send to all of you my very best wishes. My spirit is with you and my support for this fundamental human issue will remain a constant motivation in my commitment to the public life of this country.

Greetings from the Hon. John Gogo

Minister of Alberta Advanced Education

The Official Opening

Tuesday, October 9, 1990, at 7:00 p.m.

On behalf of the Premier and Alberta Advanced Education, I bring greetings to everyone attending this major Literacy Conference appropriately named—"LAUNCHING OF THE '90S."

As you know, Alberta achieved the highest score as compared to all other Canadian provinces in numeracy and the second highest score in reading in the recently completed Statistics Canada Literacy Survey. The fact we achieved these results is a testament to your dedication, commitment and, most of all, your perseverance, to a very important issue that not only has social but economic implications for this province. I want to express my appreciation to all the professionals and especially to all our volunteer literacy tutors. You have earned my respect and admiration.

Since the mid '40s, Alberta has recognized the importance of vocational training, and since the mid '60s, the importance of literacy and academic upgrading. This year the Alberta Government through Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Career Development and Employment and Alberta Education will spend \$90 million in the area of literacy. The Statistics Canada Literacy Survey proves it; Alberta is about 10 percentage points higher than the national average. Now that's

success with a capital "S." Together we are making a difference!

This is the 25th consecutive year that the AVCs have been providing literacy, academic upgrading and vocational training to Albertans. In the last 10 years alone, 195,000 Albertans have benefited, a remarkable achievement. During the summer I announced that the AVCs would now be known as Alberta Vocational Colleges. A title that is well deserved considering the professionalism and service provided to Albertans.

Since becoming the Minister in May 1989, I have taken the opportunity to visit the majority of the institutions in the system. I must say, in addition to the AVC's, I am most impressed with the quality of the literacy programming offered by our colleges, community educational consortia, and further educational councils.

At this time I want to thank the conference organizers including Patrick Fahy (AVC Edmonton), Vicki Nicholson (AVC Edmonton), Douglas Bates (AVC Edmonton), Abram Konrad (U of A), Wenda Housego (AAAL), Lyle Emmott (ACCESS Network), Judy Stewart (ATESL) and Carol Humphries (EACER) and all the support staff and volunteers for your hard work. On behalf of Premier Don Getty and the Government of Alberta, you have our sincerest thanks. Keep up the good work!

Special Address—Hon. Ramon J. Hnatyshyn

Governor-General of Canada

It is a great pleasure to be here at the final session of this launching of the '90s Literacy Conference. I understand that it was well attended and that participants felt they gained new information and insights from your efforts. However, the question underlying your theme is one all people committed to the literacy movement are going to have to answer. Where do we go from here?

In just a few weeks, Literacy Year will officially come to an end. Does it mean that interest in literacy will decline? Will the problem be returned to its traditional place on the back burner? The past year, after all, has been a high intensity time for those promoting literacy. We saw the release of a major motion picture, "Stanley and Iris," starring two of Hollywood's leading luminaries, dealing with illiteracy. There was the publication of **More Than Words Can Say**, a book in which noted Canadians explained movingly and sensitively what reading means to them. Canada Post issued a stamp in support of literacy and sponsored a literacy film called "Flight for Freedom" that is being shown in major television markets around the country. There were conferences in many parts of Canada, at which representatives of all major sectors of Canadian society, governments, business, labor and education shared their concerns and experiences.

Perhaps you are unique, however, in focusing attention on how to maintain interest in literacy in the years to come once all the public attention has returned to other matters. How can you persuade people to continue their efforts on behalf of literacy? First, I believe that in identifying the problem at this point, rather than waiting a few years, when indifference might

have overcome the issue, you are taking an important step in prevention. In other words, by recognizing that literacy can slip from the public agenda, you are helping to stop that from happening.

Everyone knows how many calls there are on those who are willing volunteers. No doubt each of you has worked and worked hard in the cause of literacy, especially this year. Therefore, as a second step, each person here must consider making a firm new commitment to continuing involvement for a specific time, perhaps no less than another year. That means keeping up public awareness campaigns, teaching programs, production of teaching materials, the entire range of projects that were undertaken in 1990.

Public policy needs and our complex economic and social environment make great demands on the attention and concern of legislators. Therefore, the necessary third step is to keep communicating your concern about literacy to the media, to all levels of government, and to your fellow citizens. You might even consider plans for another conference at some time in the future if you want to assess the effectiveness of your efforts after 1990.

When I took office as Governor-General, I identified literacy as one of the key issues that I intend to discuss with Canadians. I am fully prepared to keep doing so as much when the official year has ended as I have in the past nine months, so I wish you individually and as a group the greatest good fortune in all that you do. With the energy you have shown and with the long term view that motivates your concerns, I am certain you will find the success you so richly deserve.

Paulo Freire on Adult Education: An Interview and Panel Discussion

Carlos Torres

At the University of Alberta, a number of colleagues and I invited Freire to come here in person a year ago. It was about the time he became the Secretary for Education of the city of São Paulo, but he had to decline. He was quite upset because he had been in the Province of Alberta twice, I guess, and had been very happy here.

Freire himself has put adult education on the academic and politic map because he has created a new philosophy of education. He has shown examples of how to promote literacy training, setting up several principles methodologically and politically that are very effective, and at the same time helping the people who are in power. He is man of fire as you will see in the video. He can bring to a conversation so much intensity and brilliance that is very difficult to match. He is 69 years old now and after four hours of video recording he was as fresh as a 25-year-old man, and I was absolutely exhausted and had to go to sleep for the whole afternoon. The reason we have Freire is because, beyond his name, his is an example of a practical, political and academic life, and at the same time one that can be very fruitful for all of us.

When we tried to organize the video, I was doing research in Brazil, so I could communicate with Freire often. He had been kind enough to supply me with advice every once in a while, so I asked him, "Would you like to do a video like this?" And he actually said, "Well, I don't know. I like to talk to people. I don't know if I will be able to talk to people in front of a camera, so I am not sure." He is such a personable individual that he thought bringing his message on a video wouldn't be the same, but I thought that was the only opportunity we would have to hear him at this important event.

So I worked hard enough to convince him, and when we started talking the magic started appearing, and he felt like he was talking to me without being distracted by the camera. We made the video in a most modest way in terms of resources. We hired a local crew and we had the tremendous support of the ACCESS Network. There were Sicilian people and the Canadian people who were somewhat in the middle trying to be the mediator of the whole process.

We began taping in a very old house, an incredibly big house, in a middle-class area in São Paulo. The house

was rented by television workers in São Paulo, a private company connected with the workers' party. Freire belongs to the party and they had done some work for the party and for the Secretary of Education. Since they knew Freire very well and had already worked with him, I thought that they would be the best people for the job. They did quite a nice job even though the resources were quite limited.

I am pretty sure Freire will see the video by the end of the month when I will bring it to him in Brazil. He will be very happy because I think the video has captured his explosive personality and some of his key ideas regarding literacy training. The importance of his work, the importance of his talk, is up to you to measure. In terms of the quality of the presentation in the video, and in terms of what he represents in the world, I am not sure we could have had something better than we have now. I think we did the best we could, and I think Freire will be happy. Hopefully, you will be happy and at the same time challenged as I was by talking to him.

Video Presentation *Narrator*

In June of 1990, Dr. Carlos Torres, a lecturer in sociology, travelled to São Paulo, Brazil, to interview that country's most famous educator, Dr. Paulo Freire. We spoke about Dr. Freire's youth, the experiences that led him into teaching. We spoke about the link between political consciousness and learning, which underlies Paulo Freire's revolutionary educational theories. We spoke of Dr. Freire's unique approach to the problem of illiteracy: teacher and student learning together how to read the world and thus the word.

Paulo Freire was born in Recife, Brazil in 1921. In the book, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, co-authored with Donaldo Macedo, Dr. Freire wrote; "I learned to read and write on the ground of the backyard of my house, in the shade of the mango trees, with words from my world rather than from the wider world of my parents. The earth was my blackboard, the sticks my chalk."

Torres

Let us start by asking Professor Paulo Freire about his past. How did you become involved in the field of education? When and how did you start to live and write *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*?

Paulo Freire

For me, being curious when I was a child was a permanent state of mind. Sometimes when I think of that and try to remember, I have the impression that the totality of my body was curious. I was always asking questions of myself, not exclusively to my parents for example, but of myself. I also loved going beyond the question—that is, the answers—and reformulating the questions, starting from the answers I was receiving. I also remember how much I loved to risk. Not of course to risk dangerously, but to do something which I call today a second kind of intellectual adventure, because I was not afraid.

When I was an adolescent, I remember the times in which I used to allow my imagination to fly; and, generally, my imagination went very far away. But always in my imagination I was a teacher. That is, I had dreams, dreams of becoming a teacher. I loved to teach. I used to play along as a teacher in my private conversations with myself because I loved to do that. And this is what I still love today as I continue to be a teacher.

I needed to help my mother as my father had died when I was 13 years old, and we still had lots of difficulties to survive. I used to study very seriously the Portuguese syntax. I knew I had a very good command of our language, so I started teaching privately to get some money. Sometimes I used to teach my old colleagues who were not good students of Portuguese, and the more I experienced teaching young people like me, the more I became convinced that I really was a teacher, or becoming a teacher.

When I was 23 years, I met my first wife, whom you also met—Elza. Elza was a very good educator; she was a great preschool teacher. She knew how to deal with the kids and how to make them write and read the words. I met her preparing for a seminar, and she came to me to teach some syntax classes. Because of that, today, I have eight grandchildren, because of the syntax of the Portuguese language I am a grandfather.

When I was a child I met the kids of the peasants and the workers, with whom I used to play. I learned lots of things about poverty when I was a child. When I was 26 years old I was invited to work for another institution where I could meet the urban and rural workers. It was a fantastic moment of my life. Maybe the years I spent working every day with peasants, with workers, in Pernambuco, my state; the years I spent with them, making mistakes, speaking to them in a wrong way, but learning how to do better, were years for the development of some of my ideas today.

Narrator

After receiving his doctorate from the University of Recife in 1959, Paulo Freire participated in campaigns against illiteracy throughout northeast Brazil. When the military seized power in Brazil in 1964, Dr. Freire was exiled to Chile where he witnessed the late '60s mobilization of peasants and workers. His experiences gave rise to his classic book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Later, his work would influence literacy campaigns throughout the world.

Torres

Let me now ask you about a word that you have used for more than 30 years—you stopped using it a few years ago—conscientization, that neologism in English which some people have translated as “critical consciousness” or “awareness.” What does it mean for you, the notion of conscientization?

Freire

The French, “prise de conscience,” to take consciousness of, is a normal way of being a human being. Conscientization is something which goes beyond the “prise de conscience”; it is something which implies to analyze. It is a kind of reading the world, almost rigorously. It's the way of reading how society works. It's the way to understand better the problem of interests, the question of power. Conscientizing implies a deepened reading of reality. What I mean by a deepened and critical reading of reality is some kind of reading or understanding of reality which is starting and respecting. The common sense goes beyond the common sense. Conscientization implies that we begin to establish relationships between facts.

For example, if I speak about Pinochet in Latin America, I know that I am not just speaking about Pinochet as an individual from Chile. I am speaking about lack of respect for power, the falling power concerning us in Latin America, as I understand the relationships between imperialism and dominated nations. Pinochet is not only himself. That is, this possibility of establishing relationships between facts, the events in society, is one of the goals for the conscientizing process. Conscientization is never a kind of aspirin which we give or prescribe to the oppressed people. No, no, it's not a medicine. It's an exercise of understanding much more rigorously how society works.

Let us suppose that I show a group of illiterates a picture of some area in São Paulo in which we have poverty, sometimes misery. It is a piece of the big city, of the reality in which the illiterates live. I am trying to challenge them to see São Paulo, to see the concreteness through a picture, a piece of the totality. This is an exercise in knowing. We always have to do that. We have

to split the totality which we are trying to know and then bring it back together.

Torres

How could you link literacy training, for some people conceived as merely teaching how to read, write and do basic literacy, with the notion of conscientization or with the project of conscientization?

Freire

I think one of the tasks we have as teachers, as educators, is as follows: if education is a theory of knowledge being put into practice, it's impossible to think of education without thinking of knowing—of knowing and not of transferring knowledge.

For me, the first moment of adult literacy—from the point of view of a theory of knowledge—should be that teachers should form, not train, should help the educatees to understand the reasons why it's necessary to get distance from the object. On the other hand, to learn how to approach the object in getting distance from it. Because, dialectically, the only way you have to approach is to get distance. Do you see that? In getting distance from the object, I approach the object. Without that, it's difficult to understand these things. And for me conscientization is this.

Narrator

Asked what he would have to say to the 1990 literacy conference in Edmonton, Dr. Freire had two comments.

Freire

First of all, teaching someone how to read and to write words is something very serious, which implies, or demands from those who teach a strong respect for those who are being taught. What do I mean by respect for those who are being taught? I mean respect for the knowledge, based of course on a common sense which the illiterate bring with them to the classes: respect for the knowledge they already have and respect for their language which is culture, for their identity.

My words for those who will be together in this meeting is that they become prepared, well formed, competent to teach, but that they never forget they are involved in a political process. It's not just a game, and it is also not a question of doing a favor to the illiterates. It's a kind of engagement.

Narrator

In spite of misunderstanding of his work and criticisms of his theories, Dr. Freire continues to argue that linking conscientization with literacy training implies an

educational process that is directive. His concern is that this directive education must remain democratic.

Freire

The point is to understand what are the possibilities of distortion that directiveness can suffer, can be exposed to. The first one is manipulation, the directiveness to be manipulative. It is the way the authoritarian teachers deal with their educational practice. Directiveness of education in the hands of authoritarian people becomes necessarily manipulation.

The other risk, or the other possibility, is for directiveness of education to come into the hands of expontaneists. Expontaneism is license, that is, you do what you want to do and not what you can do. It is the second risk we have when we don't understand and when we don't live, we don't experience the directiveness of education.

Torres

What about the hidden curriculum? What about the social relationships established at the level of the classroom? What about the values promoted in the sometimes unspoken relationships between teacher and student?

Narrator

In asking this question, Dr. Torres went directly to one of Paulo Freire's key concepts in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the fact that an oppressive ideology can be so ingrained in a person that it forms a psychological obstacle to liberation; or, in the case of a teacher, the ability to learn with students while teaching.

Freire

Right now I go to the main part of your question, the hidden curriculum. Let us suppose that I am more or less theoretically clear concerning what I should do in my relationships with the students, but the power of the authoritarian ideology, which I keep inside myself, is strong. I am dependent on it, historically, socially and individually. Even though, theoretically, I would like to be and proclaim the excellence of democracy in practice, I am an authoritarian teacher. Then in being an authoritarian teacher, I am expressing the hidden curriculum which has to do with the ideology I keep inside myself. Because of that, Carlos, I think that one of the most important tasks educators face is to think critically about what they do, about their practice. It means to invite ourselves to think about what we are doing. That is, to exercise self-criticism every day in our classes.

The most deepened aspect of this hidden curriculum is in the very historical, social experience of society and of

the teacher. If the democratic teacher is not able to become more and more critical of his/her historical past and social condition, the hidden curriculum becomes more and more full of ideological undercurrents.

I want to talk about the relationships between educators. A very special case was an educator who became angry and she said to me, "Yes, yes, yes, I am authoritarian and I will continue to be." I said to her, "Look, OK, I know that you are authoritarian, but I would like to ask you, very lovingly, to begin to be less authoritarian in this administration. But really, I cannot impose on you the taste of democracy."

Torres

Some people have complained that Paulo Freire is such a gifted teacher, such a brilliant facilitator, he's asking all who have been raised to the profession of teacher, not necessarily the vocation of teacher, to be like him. To have the same confidence in becoming; to have the same thirst for knowledge; to be as competent politically as he is; to be as competent technically as he is. What would you say to those who complain, those kind of teachers who are not there?

Freire

Really, it's not easy to have this kind of teacher, but I think that I could begin by asking a question. Is it easy to have, to form, to train good social scientists, good physicists, competent people, serious people, honest people, dedicated people, loving people? Is it easy? No. I would say that everything is difficult. The question for me is whether it's possible or not, whether it is an impossible dream or a possible dream. For me, first of all, it's a possible dream. Secondly, when you know that some kind of dream is possible, you have another question: Is it possible for today or for tomorrow?

Narrator

For Paulo Freire, the work of teaching is a constant re-evaluation of theory in the light of practice, an evolution that never stops, that never regards itself as complete.

Freire

The question for me is that, inside of practice, we have a hidden theory. The point for me is how to unveil the practice in order to get into the hands of the unknown theory, the not yet perceived theory, and how to discover in the practice the not yet knowledge, which is a theoretical task. The more I think critically, the more possibilities I have, first, to understand the *raison d'être* for the very practice and, secondly, to become able to have a better practice next time. To think that

theoretical practice is something which can be mastered just inside of rooms or laboratories, to lose any kind of contact with reality, is a fantastic mistake.

Do you see, Carlos, how we at universities sometimes teach students—we teach students how to read texts, but we never teach them how to read the world? It is impossible to read texts without relating the texts with, or to, the contexts. It's impossible, as I always say, to read the words without reading the world.

It is necessary to call, to invite, to challenge students from the time they are children to begin to look at reality. When I speak about the world, I am not exclusively speaking about the trees, about the mountains, the rivers, about nature, but rather about social structures such as politics and culture. We have a duty to understand in order to survive in society and, above all, to change in society.

Narrator

At 69 years of age, Paulo Freire has never in his life had so much opportunity to assess the dynamics between theory and practice. As Secretary of Education of the city of São Paulo, Dr. Freire has been able to make changes that have already improved scholastic achievement in the city. He has also made important changes in the democratic administration of municipal education in São Paulo. One of the major changes he has instituted are school councils, councils that bring parent, student and teacher representatives together with school administrators for the purpose of democratic decision-making.

Torres

What are the joys, what are the sorrows of being not only a political man, but a man in a political position? Not only Freire writing about or on power, but Freire in power?

Freire

I confess to you today that the obstacles are stronger than I thought they would be. But I am happy; I am happy. There is a movement of being in administration in the government, not necessarily in power, which oscillates between sorrow and happiness. We have worked a lot to democratize our schools; that is, we have to respect the kids of the workers with whom we work. We have to make the teachers more competent. We are emphasizing a different understanding of behavior in the school. We are giving emphasis to some kind of presence of parents, teachers and students in the constitution of what we call councils of the school.

The school council is actually the representation of power, not only the power of the director of the school.

It is constituted by teachers, representatives of the parents and also of the people of the school and students. Constantly I am admitting people to work inside the school; I sign the document, but the indication comes from the council. It's not myself that chooses the person. It is one of the serious attempts we make to democratize the school, to decentralize power.

Narrator

No one who comes to listen to Paulo Freire can fail to see and hear the extraordinary optimism of the man. In his introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he writes, "From these pages I hope at least the following will endure: my trust in the people and my faith in men, and in the creation of the world in which it will be easier to love."

Freire

I am 68, almost 69 years old, and next year I'll be 70 years old, and I feel as if I were 25 years old. Although I feel I'm not as young as I think I am when I have to go 50 floors up in an elevator. But I am full of life precisely because I love life.

Torres

Well, we have discussed the past of Paulo Freire, the present of Paulo Freire, and people will wonder what's the future of Paulo Freire. Nobody can speak about the future, but I wonder if you can tell us in a nutshell, what's the legacy of Paulo Freire for educators in Latin America, in the world?

Freire

What is my legacy? I think that it is impossible to be sad about Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire was a man who loved, who could not understand a life existence without love and without knowing. Paulo Freire lived, loved and he tried to know. Paulo Freire was constantly curious and asking questions of himself.

Panel Discussion

Michael Fox

I have read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* about three times, and followed that up with *The Politics of Education* about three times. And I have tried to do some things in my program in Washington, D.C. that one might call "Freirian." In fact, about five years ago I had two graduate students in International Education come into my program and evaluate my program for eight weeks. They decided that I have a Freirian-based program. I did not agree with them, and I would not agree with them today.

Freire has a dream. He considers it a possible dream; maybe not possible for today, but possible for tomorrow. In terms of what I have seen of so-called Freirian-based programs in the United States, I think tomorrow is a long way off. I think the reason it's not possible for today is that we have an awful lot to do, a lot of work to do, as educators.

From the first time I read Freire, I never thought that he was talking to me about something I ought to do with learners somewhere else, but rather about what I needed to do for myself and what we as educators needed to do for ourselves. We need a theory that links political consciousness and learning, educators who will see education in themselves as part of a political process, who will be able to put theory into practice someday. But I don't believe he is giving us a prescription for that, nor is it something that can be in a training manual someplace or prepackaged and sold to literacy programs. He talks a great deal about the hidden curriculum and, while we might find that a difficult concept, we understand it very well. As I understand it, we are simply who we are and we need to look very carefully at who we are.

Most of us, because of who we are and where we were schooled or, if you were lucky, educated, have a lot of work to do so that we don't have what he calls an authoritarian ideology. We need to become other than what we are today, and if we don't we won't fit into his theory. He tells us by speaking of himself how we can do that. We ought not to go out and work with learners and talk with them about reading the world rather than the word, when we as educators have not done that. We are not to talk about reading the text without reading the context when we as educators have not done that ourselves first. We should not expect our learners to take risks when we are not willing to take risks, especially political risks. That, I think, is a key point in Freire that many people don't understand—that we need to be reborn. We need to die and be reborn as educators, much like the Christian theology teaches about death and rebirth.

All of these things we have to do; we cannot learn them in a classroom or in the university. There are some things we can learn, but we need to work with ourselves. Some instructor or some training program may give us some guidelines for working with ourselves but we need to work very hard to have and to understand a theory that we can put into practice. But most of us are not ready to do that today; tomorrow, perhaps.

When Freire talks about learners and all of the things that learners ought to do or be able to do, we have to be the first learners. We educators have to be the first learners, not those 10 or 20 people in a class or a group. I think that comes secondly. In the political or the poli-

tics of education he quotes Marx thus, "The educator should also be educated," and that's our first task. If we would ask our learners one important question or make one important comment to our learners, it is regarding us. We the educators becoming educated, and our learners can give us some very good ways in which we might do that.

One final point about the Freire programs I see in the United States; most of them I consider an insult to Freire. They are not about people who are oppressed and dependent on liberation; they are about people who are deprived and need development. Freire is not talking about people who are deprived and need us to get them to understand the deprivation and get them to develop their lives, their family planning methods. I don't think that's what Freire's all about, but that is how Freire is being used and abused internationally, and it concerns me.

Klause Gabriel

The following is a statement prepared by Lorna Bell who was unable to be here tonight. She has entitled it, "Literacy and Role Development."

In 1977 a small group of women started a tutoring program in Fort Vermilion and La Crete in Northern Alberta. They looked for and found a way to help a few family members, neighbors, and friends learn to read and write using the Laubeck "each one, teach one" approach. From a modest beginning which depended on 100% volunteers, a strong and successful adult literacy program has grown. This includes full-time classes with paid tutors and training allowances for students. It can be called a literacy immersion approach, and best of all it has become a fully integrated part of adult education offered by Fairview College in the northern region.

On the surface it may look as if adult literacy in Canada is just a simple educational matter. A minority of adults lack basic skills. Let's teach a few of them to read and write. But from the beginning it has been clear in our northern experience that adult literacy was more a community development issue, perhaps a political issue, than anything else. This was strongly demonstrated in 1984 when our tutoring program was chosen to be one of 10 rural development projects to represent Canada at the International Exposition in New Delhi, India.

The women who pioneered literacy in the north had all been very active lobbyists for several years. They had become extremely frustrated with the often inappropriate decisions made in Edmonton. Living in what is known as an improvement district in Alberta, they could not turn to local government authorities for solutions to social and economic problems, so they had to write letters, briefs, petitions, and proposals every time they saw a serious community need. Some examples of

the totally inappropriate responses to some of these lobbying efforts may help you to understand the situation in 1977 which caused this group to start an adult literacy program. Local people said they needed a nursing home as a number one priority. The government built a pensioners' residence in Fort Vermilion with 12 apartments which have never been fully occupied by pensioners. This is because most elderly people in the region choose to live in their own homes until they require nursing care, and elderly people that require nursing care are still sent hundreds of miles away from their homes and families.

Another example of the inappropriate, top-down government spending concerns the terrible roads in the region. These rough, raw roads were a serious problem, especially for farmers trying to haul grain to markets and people needing medical help from the distant south. For a long time people wrote letters, briefs, petitions and proposals to the Minister of Highways asking for good-quality paved highways, but highway paving was delayed for a long time because the department chose instead to waste millions of dollars on a harbor craft ferry experiment at Tompkins Landing across the Peace River south of La Crete. The harbor ferry was launched with much publicity. Then for the next three years it mostly sat in pieces on the banks of the river while very expensive attempts were made to repair and modify it.

There were many other reasons why this hearty little band of lobbyists felt powerless and frustrated, but for this discussion it is interesting that they chose to focus on the high illiteracy rate in their communities as a possible cause for the overall powerlessness of the community. Perhaps they began to dream about when most of their neighbors and friends were able to write letters, briefs, petitions and proposals and the government might be forced to pay attention to grassroots wisdom. Or maybe, just maybe, when most of the adult citizens of their community acquired the needed skills to be able to vote, some real kind of local self-government might be possible.

But do newly literate citizens ever try to influence government? Well, one young man who was only a few weeks into adult literacy classes in La Crete got mad when he saw that his town was not on a prominent government-issued tourist map, so he painstakingly composed a letter and printed it out carefully using his rather awkward but proudly learned skill. It was the first letter he had ever written in his life. He carried the answering letter with its gold embossed government logo around in his pocket for weeks, showing it to so many people it began to look like old cloth, and La Crete has been on the map ever since.

I'd just like to add a few words of my own. When I began tutoring it was in a little, very, very isolated place called Buffalo Hick Prairie, and our school consisted of an old skid shack, commonly known as a chicken coop. Bill, an old farmer, was one of my first students and could barely read and write, and we froze and we persevered through that first winter. I discovered that Bill was teaching me more about farming and homesteading than I was teaching him about reading and writing. I am sure the only reason the bears, wolves or the cold haven't gotten us yet is because of what Bill and other neighbors like him taught us. Bill's pastor took me aside awhile ago and told me that we must be doing something right, because Bill was now reading from the Bible in church.

We have another success in the north. The steering committee through our literacy program has existed now for many years. It is made up of literacy students, tutors, coordinators, community representatives and college administrators. The committee has served as an advisory body to the college administration and the board of governors. Through the steering committee our literacy program has been able to stay closely in touch with community needs.

This is a combined grassroots approach or ability to set up a classroom or kitchen school wherever we find enough students and, of course, the necessary funding. We run one of these kitchen schools in my own house in the bush at Tompkins Landing where my wife tutors five students every day. Of course, our greatest problem, and I don't imagine we are the only ones that have it, is the lack of consistent reliable funding. We are scrambling for funding every year just to enable us to maintain our programs, let alone expand them to where they are needed.

But we are not always dealing with the oppressed. Many of these literacy students are very successful in their own fields, such as my friend Bill. Many already lead full, rich lives, and some are community leaders; they realize that by learning to read and write they are increasing their options as valued members of the community.

Faith Fernald

In applying Freire's remarks to ESL, I am going to stick to the situation that I know best—my own at AVC Edmonton. I think the AVC Edmonton ESL program is fairly representative of other government-funded programs in the province, at least in cities. Although aspects of our teaching certainly reflect Freire's ideas, there are several factors at play which prevent us from being really Freirian teachers. To begin with, our students usually don't have enough vocabulary or English to undertake a rigorous analysis of the relationships of

power in society, the kind of analysis that Freire was talking about. But having said that, it is at the lowest levels of ESL that our classes are probably the most Freirian.

At the very low levels, the teacher spends a lot of time listening to the students, and the students usually don't have any formal education so they don't have any preconceived ideas of what a classroom should be like. Also, because they can't express themselves very well with language, and because they seem less inhibited, they express themselves through drawing, through posters, through acting, and through singing. Teachers are able to find out quite a bit about their lives, their themes and their concerns, and these become the bases for the lessons at these low levels. The language experience stories that these students write and the English words they learn are English translations of words that are very important in their lives. In that way, ESL teaching that I am familiar with is quite Freirian.

At the higher levels the students have more language, more vocabulary, and they have more of an academic background, and so they are more accustomed to traditional classroom settings. At these levels, the teachers also spend a lot of time listening to their students, and I think that ESL teachers have a lot of respect for their students. Part of the reason for listening is pedagogical. We listen for the form of what they say; but we also listen to the content of what they say, and we end up knowing a lot about our students' lives outside the classroom.

The videotape encourages teachers to be constantly self-criticizing and questioning. ESL teachers do that a lot, especially in the area of methodology and pedagogy. We are always trying to find out about new ways of helping our students learn English. But, this self-questioning stops at the level of pedagogy. Most of us don't question the power relationships in society, and the historical and social conditions around us. And if we do, we tend to keep these questions out of the classroom. Our mandate at AVC Edmonton ESL is to help the people we are teaching get along better in Canadian society. So, frankly speaking, reproducing Canadians is our mandate, and so most of us don't question Canadian society in the classroom.

Sometimes some of our students, especially eastern European students, might criticize certain aspects of Canadian society. They ask, "Why aren't ambulances green? Why don't you have universal dental care? Why are daycares so expensive?" An ESL teacher will generally nod sympathetically, but he or she won't use that criticism as a point for discussion which rigorously examines power relationships and problems in the society.

The kind of action that Freire says should come out of a classroom and affect peoples' lives outside the classroom do happen in ESL classrooms. But they are almost always on a personal level; so a student will get a job, get a driver's license, or get away from an abusive husband. But the kind of broader social action that Clause was talking about, that seldom happens in the institutional ESL classes. Lobbying your MP or staging a renters' strike and these sorts of things might happen in private companies around the city, but not so often in these institutional classrooms.

I'd like to close by asking a couple of questions about Paulo Freire. If we are teachers we were usually lower middle class, and we got to be middle class by playing the game and not questioning society. To the degree that we have power, it is natural that we would like our students to end up with that same power. My question is, "How do we balance that with helping them to get power the way we know best and, at the same time, helping them to get that distance Freire talks about, and look critically at the society and the institutions which will give them that power?" And secondly, "Is it possible to be a Freirian teacher in an institutional setting?"

Arturo Oneila Fraseda

Good evening to you all. Thank you for inviting me to your country. I will try to express myself. I apologize because I don't speak English very well, but I am going to try to communicate with you through my own experience, my own living, my personal struggle as a Latin American.

One day we were in near South Africa and a woman came to our peasant house where we were with Paulo Freire with a cassette. This woman said to the family, "This is a cassette that we recorded coming from your aunt, and the aunt sends you a recorded message." She turned the cassette on and we listened. This woman was living in Cape Verde. The entire family started crying, and started trying to find the aunt in the machine. They figured that the aunt had become very, very small, and was inside the machine. Then Paulo said, "Maybe it is better to stop the recording because we have a family drama now."

I feel exactly the same after seeing Paulo in the video. Knowing him and talking with him so many times, and now seeing him on the screen like that, I was thinking how far we are from this technological society, from this management of science and technology, how many gaps we have as Latin Americans. I am looking at the phantom of a real man. It is complicated for me.

Hearing Paulo tonight, something became very important for me. He says that he learned from the people. He says that one of the most important teachings that

he received was when he was living with the peasants, with the poor people. He created his own theory when he remembered all these thoughts, these ideas coming from the people. And he also says that he learned from his own errors. I believe that these two aspects, to learn from people and to learn from personal errors are two very important points. Many times as teachers we lose the sensitivity to hear the students, we lose the sensitivity to be with the students; we pretend that we know. We don't want to learn from our ignorance. One day in Tanzania we were with different Ministers of Education of African countries, and Paulo said, "If I as an educator need to understand the other one as another one, I want to pass through the experience of the other one. I need to understand the suffering and the joys of the other one, and through this human experience I could help him in his own way to understand reality. That is a fact of law and if I do this to my woman, Elza, I am a woman." I could see, again, the face of the Ministers of Education of African countries really surprised when Paulo translated his macho personality to the context of a woman.

In a sense to show how big is the commitment when we try to support the efforts of somebody who is trying to understand reality. This question of the conscientization is very, very difficult, because when we start to understand where we are located, who we are, the first inclination we have is to deny it, is to say, No, I don't want to know; I don't want to have the responsibility to be. I prefer to have history made by other ones; I don't want to do the history.

When we were working in the mountains of Nicaragua liberating the young soldiers they said, "This is absolutely beautiful, but it is more beautiful that we are transforming the reality of our country. We are transforming the oppression of Somoza, and we are transforming the oppression of the United States in our country. Now to read the thoughts of Cardinal, Borges, Cabezas, Ortega, and to write them, is beautiful. And we can write beautiful things in this war because we decided to make our own history, because we decided to create the beauty in this country." That's why it is so beautiful to read and write.

But the process of conscientization takes time, because many times the educators choose and need to be transformed. If we don't experience our own conscientization, our own transformation, we cannot teach others how to transform. We become liars. We can teach only what we have experienced, not what we read in books. Where we only pretend to do conscientization, maybe we can transform the text, but when we go beyond conscientization and put it into practice, at that moment transforming the reality we become transformed. That is an important aspect of the conscientization, not only to work in ideological questions and ideas.

The war of ideas is a false war, because one idea creates another idea, and another idea creates another idea, and soon you become an astronaut. You are in the cosmos. But when you take the ideas and put them into reality, you transform that reality. It is at that moment that you become somebody who is transforming himself, who is making history, who is taking the responsibility to be.

It is in this situation that the question of education cannot be only a question of curriculum; it cannot be a question of program; it cannot be a question of evolution. Education must become a fact of life, social justice, a creation, a transformation. In that sense, the dimension of education, of the educator and of the students,

becomes a totally different dimension. The institutions, of course, castrate, they demean education.

It is possible that society is being changed in order to achieve these values. It is never education that changes society; it is society that changes education.

Finally, I think that we cannot say that there exists a Freirian program or a Freirian methodology or a Freirian philosophy. He says in the video, "I learn from the people." If this Freirian position exists, it exists because the Latin American people exist, because the African people exist, because you Canadians exist. And the preoccupation of Freire was how to be better, how to be more, how to be. We cannot be a copy of Paulo Freire; we can only be ourselves in our own way of liberation.

Keynote—Jonathan Kozol

I have to admit every time I stand up to speak in front of an audience of teachers nowadays I have this fear that I will reenact the recent nightmare of Dan Quayle, our Vice-President of the United States. He was asked to speak not long ago for an organization called the United Negro College Fund, which raises scholarship money for black students in the United States. Why they invited him is something of a puzzle to me, but he did his best to prove he was on their side. He tried to remember the motto of a group which is on TV a lot in the United States with the motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." I am sure some of you have seen that on American television. But, he got it wrong, as he often gets things wrong. He said "It's a terrible thing to lose your mind." When the audience laughed he tried to correct it, and said, "Or not to have a mind at all."

I'm very glad to be here with so many teachers, organizers, people who care about the poor. I started my own career as a teacher 25 years ago, 1965, in Boston, Massachusetts. I wasn't a real teacher because I wasn't certified. I had made the mistake of going to Harvard where, in those days, you could not get an education degree. I majored in English and I planned to go on to become an English professor at Harvard, but in the summer of 1964 there was a strange stirring in America. Thousands of young college students, many of them white and affluent college students, were going down south to places like Mississippi and Alabama to work in the Civil Rights Movement. One of those young people was a friend of mine, Michael Schwerner. He went down to Mississippi and was murdered that summer with two other young men, two white, one black, murdered by the Ku Klux Klan for trying to help to teach poor, illiterate black people to read enough to be able to vote.

That event shook me beyond words and in a sense changed my life. I remember feeling uncertain as to whether I wanted to go on with a traditional career. You know Rhodes scholars usually do very traditional things; they become college professors, college presidents, bank presidents, United States senators, things like that.

Suddenly, that summer I read a little notice. I was in Harvard Square in Cambridge, which is across the river from Boston, and I saw a little notice stuck to a tree asking for volunteers to work in a freedom school; that was a term we used in those days. I got on the subway and went over to Roxbury, the black ghetto of Boston. I'd never been there; I had grown up in the suburbs.

I was given a class of about 15 fourth and fifth grade kids who couldn't read beyond the first grade level. I was thrown into the class and told to teach them. I had to learn how to teach reading; I knew nothing about that at all. I was supposed to do it for an hour and a half three mornings a week, but something wonderful happened that summer. I found those children so moving, so stirring, so beautiful, bright, decent, wonderful kids who, through no fault of their own, had been intellectually demolished by the unequal racist-segregated schooling they had been given. Most of those kids had never had a permanent teacher; they had had substitute teachers, which was very common and still is in the inner cities of America. We got on beautifully. I loved the kids and at their request we changed it from an hour and a half three times a week to all morning every day of the week, and then we extended it to Saturdays.

Then some of these kids started bringing their 16- and 17-year-old brothers and sisters, some of whom were as tall or taller than me. At first the older brothers and sisters would stay out in the hallway because officially they weren't allowed—this was a program for little children. It was a hot summer, and I'd see these grown teenagers out there sweating in this airless corridor on the top floor. It was in a church, as most of these programs were. At first I thought they were just there to bring their little brothers and sisters with them, but then I realized they were listening outside the door and I learned it was because most of them couldn't read either. So I asked them to join the class, and before the summer was over we had 25 people in there of all ages.

When September came and it was time for them to go back to school I felt a sense of panic because I didn't want to lose them. So I went to the Boston School Committee (school board) and said, "I'd like to teach as a regular teacher." "Well, where's your certificate?" they asked. I didn't have it. So they said, "Well, you could be a sub if you want." So I said, "Okay, I'll be a sub"; and they started calling me. Every morning at about seven o'clock I'd get a call, and every time it was a different school, different class, and a different grade level; an extraordinary kind of basic training for education. I just can't tell you what I went through. It's the most challenging thing, the hardest thing I've ever done in my life, far harder than going to Harvard or Oxford. One day I taught all white kindergarten children, little Irish children in one neighborhood, and the next day I was teaching twelfth grade German to all black children in another neighborhood. I'd never studied German. I taught advanced Latin, Greek, and I survived.

After six weeks I was still alive and the school board called me and said, "We could give you a permanent job if you'd like," but there was a little catch in the voice. I asked "What's the problem?" and they said, "Well it's in an undesirable neighborhood." Well I knew right away what they meant; they meant it was in Roxbury, a black neighborhood. So I said "Sure, I'll take it."

They sent me straight into the very neighborhood in which I had been working that summer. I was overjoyed. They gave me a class of fourth grade kids; an extraordinary experience. These were kids who had had 12 teachers before me that year alone. By the time they called me it was almost November. You can imagine how wild those kids were by that point; they were just going crazy. Now, how would you like to be a first-year substitute teacher in a black neighborhood and be the 13th teacher those kids had? It was a terribly hard job, and the kids were just demolished.

Nowadays in the United States we have people like Mrs. Bush, the president's wife, who go around and say "Isn't it a shame that we have these poor, unfortunate illiterates" and she's kind—"these poor, unfortunate people; how did they slip through the cracks?" If I were ever invited to the White House, which I shan't be I'm sure, I would say to her, "These kids didn't slip through any cracks; they never had a floor to stand on in the first place. If your son Neil is illiterate, if Dan Quayle is illiterate, he slipped through the cracks because he had a marble floor beneath him from the moment of conception, but these kids had nothing." That will help to explain some of the things I am going to say about literacy.

I was just astonished to see an entire class of children who by Thanksgiving time of their fourth grade year were lucky to be reading at second grade level. I'll never forget particularly one little girl in that class, a rather tall, very thin girl who sat in the back row and just glared at me, just looked at me and every white adult who came into that school. She just stared at us with this burning look of smouldering, suppressed rage in her eyes, and never smiled. So I was a sub, and now I was a permanent sub to the great dismay of my mother and father, as you can imagine, who thought that by now I would probably be Secretary of State. But not so permanent as I would have liked, however, because I was fired.

I was fired ten days before the end of the school year. What I did wrong, allegedly, was that I had read the children poetry that was not included on official lists prescribed by the school system. They had these lists; I suppose all school systems have them. Some incompetent psychologists prepare these lists, and they tell you that children of a certain age can appreciate this

but not that, this sort of thing. I didn't know; I had never seen the list, had never heard of it. Seeing kids who are utterly bored and angry, as you can imagine, they were in a state of rage, these kids, and having reading material which in no way reflected their lives.

These were the old days of all-white readers, you know basic readers, basal readers, the same types of books as in Canada, I suppose. But in the United States these were published by a company called Scott Foresman. I'll never forget that horrible book; it was called **Streets and Roads**. About ten years later, they did a radical version of it where they darkened the faces of a few children to make it relevant, and it was called **More Streets and Roads**. I remember that.

This book was just so boring to the children. It wasn't just that it was irrelevant culturally, because I am not one of these liberals who think that everything has to be relevant. If it is really good, it is relevant, whatever it is. That is my own belief. But this wasn't even good. It wasn't even poetry. It was rhyme—simple-minded rhyme that nobody who loves poetry would ever want to read. We'd get these directives from the school system how these children might not appreciate the poignant beauty of the Scott Foresman reader and how we had to sell it to them carefully. But it wasn't worth selling; it was junk.

So, in my naive way, I went over to Harvard Square one day to our local communist book store called the Harvard Coop. Actually it was the Harvard University Book Store, regarded as communist in much of America. I went to the local poetry section and I just picked two books. I really did it in a hurry because I didn't have much time. I just grabbed two new poetry books. One of them was Robert Frost, a well known, not very radical American poet. The other was Langston Hughes, the best known black poet in the United States.

I brought those books into class and read one poem from each book to my kids and was fired for that. The charge against me was curriculum deviation. It was on the front page of the New York Times. It said "Rhodes Scholar Fired for Curriculum Deviation in Boston Schools." Odd way America works. One week later I was hired by the Federal Government for curriculum development—those were the '60s.

The Frost poem certainly wasn't radical at all. I was being facetious when I called it our "Communist Book Store," but the Frost poem was one many of you know by heart—it's called "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Do you remember that little poem? As one black leader said later, "Probably the whitest poem ever written." There's nothing Marxist about it, but it wasn't on the list. They said that I could have read that poem in the eighth grade; it was an eighth grade poem. What

really infuriated them was not that I had read the stuff, but that the kids loved it. After I read the Langston-Hughes poem kids who had been turned off the entire year went home, met together after school in somebody's home and came back the next day and performed it as a play. Later, people speculated that there was another reason that I was fired, and that was slightly more political.

Around the time all of this was happening, Martin Luther King came to Boston. I had never seen Dr. King, but naturally I had heard him on television. He came to give a speech in Boston Common which is the heart of our city. It's the place where the abolitionists of the 19th century had held their great rallies—Frederick Douglas, William Lord Garrison and people like that.

The black leaders in Boston knew what I was doing in the school, some of them, and they asked me if I would like to be a bodyguard for Dr. King. But I was a skinny little kid then and it was clear that I wasn't needed for my physical girth as a bodyguard. There were plenty of strong, big white and black men around to fill that job. It was clear they were doing it as a kindness to me, as a way of saying, "We know what you are doing and we are glad of that." It was an act of loyalty, so I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to," and I did. I walked with Dr. King.

They gave each of us a little button to wear on our lapel, not a big badge that said something shocking like "Freedom" or something; there was nothing wild about it. It was just a little tiny enamel pin with an equal sign on it, a black pin with a white equal sign, symbol of the civil rights movement in America, and I loved it—I still have it. I put it on my jacket. That was on a Sunday, and the next day I went to school. I only had one jacket in those days as they didn't pay substitute teachers very well, and it didn't occur to me to look at the jacket. I went into class, and at about eleven o'clock the principal walked into the classroom, took one look at that button on my lapel and said to me, "Mr. Kozol, it's a nice sentiment, but don't wear it here." An extraordinary commentary on public education in America, I think. And in a sense she was right. I mean, where could be the worst possible place to bring an equal button than an unequal, segregated school. Though I hadn't intended it; it was just on my jacket.

I looked at her and said to myself, "What should I do?" because I wasn't a wild radical. I wasn't then; I'm not now. I had a good view of willingness to compromise politically and diplomatically because I didn't like to offend people. I realized, as some of you told me last night, sometimes you have to compromise in order to get something done. At that moment it seemed to me that if I removed that pin as she ordered me to do in front of the children, it would have betrayed every-

thing else that I had tried to do in that class and it would have branded me worthless as their teacher.

That classroom had been very noisy much of that year, but in that moment you could have heard a pin drop. There was absolute stillness. She stared right at me and said, "I asked you to take that pin off." And with all the children staring at me I said, "I'm sorry, I can't." She was not used to being disobeyed and she grew very red in the face; she already was red in the face, and she grew redder in the face. She turned and left the room. The silence in that room was just extraordinary. Suddenly, that tall girl I told you about before, the one who sat in the back row and never spoke, the one who had that glaring look, that anger in her eyes, suddenly in the silence she got out of her chair, she came up to the front of the room and kissed me. I'll never forget that moment—it transformed my life.

Things haven't changed very much for children of poor people in the United States. The American schools today, in 1990, with very few exceptions, continue to be racially divided, and in fiscal terms "bitterly unequal." In the richest suburban schools of the United States today about \$10,000 are invested in the education of each child every year in public education. Classes are small, literacy and math skills are delivered with remarkable consistency. In the poorest urban schools less than half that sum, approximately \$5,000 is spent on every child. Classes are large, teachers poorly paid, and some 45% of the students do not finish school. In the poorest rural areas in Mississippi, for example, less than \$2,000 are expended on each child and, as you can expect, illiteracy rates are astronomical.

I want to share with you today the sorrows and injustice of my nation. I realize that I am in Alberta, not in the United States, and that some of this will seem at first to you to be quite different from the problems that you face, but I believe you will see some similarities. Alberta doesn't have huge, nonwhite ghettos, but it has plenty of poor people, and it has the vast oppression of the native Canadians on the reservations, not at all unlike the misery of U.S. city slums.

I was in New York City last spring. I went to visit a family that I know living in a very poor, all-black section of New York, The Bronx. It's part of New York, the neighborhood where the infant death rate is higher than the rate in Third World Nations and where life expectancy is less than in Bangladesh. The mother was a strong and beautiful woman, 45 years old. Her younger child is 17 years old; his name is Richard. He goes to a large and overcrowded high school in the Bronx. He told me that books are so scarce at his high school that he went to English class for two months in the fall last year before the school supplied him with a textbook. He spent the entire year without a text in Science. He

could therefore never bring it home at night to study or to ask his mother for assistance with his homework.

Richard is a sweet kid, very gentle, very serious, never been in trouble with the law. He'd like to go to college and he knows that math and English will be terribly important, but he cannot get the help he needs from overburdened teachers. He asked his math teacher last year if he could come to her for extra help, but she informed him that she didn't have the time. He asked if he could come to school an hour early; security precautions made this impossible. Sitting in his kitchen with him, I tried to help him with his math and English. He was scared of his exams. This was last June. In math he was asked to solve the following question: $2x - 2 = 14$, what is x ? He found this baffling. In English he was told that he would have to know the parts of speech. In the sentence "Jack walks to the store," he couldn't identify the verb. He was despondent about this and other problems. We left the apartment and walked out to the street. He's a big kid, tall, handsome, strong-looking, but out on the street when we said goodbye his eyes filled up with tears. It is in this context of poverty, oppression and injustice that I want to speak to you about illiteracy. There are two things that I want to share with you. First, the vision of what my nation and perhaps your nation could be doing in the next ten years to face this challenge. Second, a very candid recognition of the failure, the refusal of American society and government to accept the challenge and the smokescreen of placebos that the U.S. Government in Washington has offered as a substitute for honest action.

The vision I hold and want to share with you is not a mechanistic one, a better reading method, or something of that sort. In a lot of these conferences there's a lot about a slightly better way of doing things. I am concerned instead with something which is inherently political. I don't believe that mass illiteracy in a nation as wealthy as the United States could possibly be a mechanistic error, a failure to teach reading by one method rather than another. I see it rather as a logical and easy outcome of a dual society in which the children of the poor have been denied, across the board, lack of proper health care for their mothers, lack of preschool, lack of housing, lack of adequate nutrition, and above all, lack of equal education in the public schools. In other words, I don't regard illiteracy as a cause of poverty, but as a consequence, a symptom. Only if it is looked at in this context, do we have any chance on earth of summoning the kind of energy we need to make more than a tiny dent in the existing problem.

The United States, as you may know, now serves in all less than 5% of all of the adult nonreaders in our nation. I suspect the figure in Canada might be very close to that. As some of you know, I wrote a book in the

1960s about the Literacy Campaign in Cuba in the 1960s. I wouldn't be surprised if most of you had never heard of this book because it was ignored by the mass media. Interestingly enough it's the only book I've written in a quarter century which the New York Times did not see fit to review, a form of censorship which will not startle anyone who understands the way that Cuba has been stigmatized in the United States.

The genius of the Cubans, in my own belief, had nothing to do with the mechanics or the phonics employed in their remarkable campaign. It was the fact that literacy was understood to be political. The views of Paulo Freire are virtually ignored by literacy groups in the United States. A Freire video like the one we saw last night has never been shown at any literacy conference in America. Freire is regarded as subversive in the U.S.A. Freire's ideas were at the heart of the approach in Cuba.

The essence of the struggle was to mobilize the nation, not around a reading theory, but around injustice. The word was perceived as a mirror of the world. Its denial to the poor was understood to be not a mistake, but a successful outcome of oppression. With this understanding the entire nation was awakened to an effort which in three short years virtually removed illiteracy in Cuba, and in the next ten years brought Cuba to the highest literacy level in the Third World. Cuba today has higher literacy than the United States, and probably than Canada. I see a few worried looks in this audience. I suppose I am looking, in some cases, at the local equivalent of republicans in my country, and I can understand that. There's a lot about Cuba I don't like; I'm not naive. I care about a free press. I'm not a Marxist; but the essence of the Cuban triumph wasn't Marxist, it was purely ethical and energized and decent.

The first sentence studied in the literacy primers used in 1961 in the Great Literacy Campaign in Cuba was this (in Spanish), "The land is rich, why are the people poor?" The same question could be asked without the slightest alteration in literacy in the U.S.A. today. Where three million homeless people live in the streets and subways of America; thirty million people live in poverty. Where individual Wall Street brokers earn up to \$500 million dollars in one year. It would be a great question to use in a literacy program in New York.

Teaching in Cuba wasn't done by rich folks for the poor. It was done in concert with the poor. Many of the teachers were poor themselves, but all were committed to a single struggle of empowerment. In the first 12 months of the campaign Cuba made more progress than in 20 previous years of nonpolitical attempts by missionary groups and teachers, used by the former dictator as a way to pacify the poor without the risk of stirring popular dissatisfaction with his rule. I studied old

primers they'd used before the literacy campaign. They were just like the ones I see at literacy centers in the U.S.A. today, the boring kind.

In literacy, the U.S.A. today is back where Cuba was under Batista. If my nation wants to address this problem with the same zeal shown by Cuba it could do so. It would cost about \$10 billion—that may sound to you like a lot, but that's less than we will spend in four months in the Persian Gulf and that would be a war worth winning. It would involve a lot more than adults; it would mean beginning with a national pre-school program starting with children at the age of 3 or 4, guaranteed full-day kindergarten, prekindergarten for all children and other transformation of our public schools from their present status, racially divided and fiscally unequal, into a single just and democratic system.

There is nothing socialist about this dream. It is the essence of free enterprise to offer every child equal access to an equal field of competition. The denial of such opportunity must be regarded as a grave betrayal of the ideologies by which both of our nations live. A national struggle on the scale that I propose would not be a one-time effort but a permanent campaign. So long as there was poverty, there would be a literacy struggle, not limited to adults alone; it would begin with children long before they enter public school. Millions of ordinary people from the poorest neighborhoods would have the opportunity to teach their neighbors. Those who couldn't teach but knew the neighborhoods first hand would be recruiters, organizers, mobilizers. High school and college students would be asked, perhaps required, to commit a year or semester to the struggle. Those who had grown up in poor communities would serve as mentors for outsiders.

So much for the dream. What is the reality in the U.S. today? After a decade of nonstop discussion in the press, the Federal Government in the United States now spends \$160 million yearly to address a problem that is costing us probably at least \$200 billion in lost productivity each year. This investment, \$160 million yearly, is less than what the U.S. spends to train its U.S. military marching bands. Including funds contributed by states and cities in America, the U.S. may spend in all about \$400 million total, less than the price of the new Presidential aircraft just delivered to George Bush.

Instead of money, the Reagan and Bush administrations have proposed two cost-free answers to our nations' literacy needs: volunteer tutors organized by private charitable groups and corporate training programs run by business, private business. I want to speak first about the business efforts of which I strongly disapprove. There would be nothing wrong with these attempts. For those few of you who are sitting

here thinking, "Oh well, these things would never happen here in Canada," without disrespect let me assure you that at least in eastern cities such as Montreal and Toronto, business programs of this sort are very much in the works, and I am sure you will see it here as well. There would be nothing wrong with these attempts if business forces in America had serious ideas about empowering poor people to acquire the substantial analytic skills that would enable them not just to read the rule books for a job, but to question the objectives of the corporation. This, of course, is not what business has in mind. The last thing IBM or Ford would try to do in adult education is to generate the leverage and imagination that might lead some of its employees to form labor unions. What business offers, therefore, is not literacy in any genuine sense, but purely mechanistic and noncritical job training. Functional literacy in the sense of reading piecemeal items of instruction, not full fledged literacy in the sense of ethical, aesthetic and political emancipation. No corporation in the U.S.A., I am sure, would ever ask its semiliterate employees "The company is rich, why are the workers poor?" I'd love to see IBM do that, huh? "The Chief Executive Officer is rich, why are the janitors so poor?" They used to hire me as a consultant for those programs; not any more.

This, then, is not education for democracy, but training for a limited utility and ultimately moral subjugation. The same is true, of course, of U.S. army literacy. Often the only literacy available to poor black males in the United States is pure obedience instruction.

The volunteer programs are the ones on which the U.S. Government has banked most heavily. These are the programs which receive the lion's share of national attention, heavily promoted by newspapers and TV, closely identified with the President's wife, who, while her husband cuts back education funds for inner cities, goes on television to advise the parents of poor children on the worth of reading to their children and attends countless literacy luncheons. They have a million of these things in the United States every year to present awards to rich white volunteers that are so-called "A Thousand Points of Light." Have you ever heard that expression? I don't want to assume that you have all been colonized by American TV, but I did notice this morning that the American network stations did come in quite clearly.

I am not opposed to volunteers and I am not opposed to charity as a benevolent idea. I am opposed to charity, however, when it has been consciously advanced as an alternative to justice, and that's the point. I realize that excellent programs, using ethical, decent volunteers, most of them not rich, are common in Alberta. I don't want, by any mistake, by omission, for anyone to go away and think that I am saying, "Nobody in Canada

should volunteer"; that's not the point at all. What I condemn in the United States is the innately condescending and paternalistic way in which the volunteers are used. The token nature of these programs in the U.S. is embarrassing.

There are 30 million functional illiterates in the United States. The volunteer programs in the U.S. serve at most 200,000 learners. All programs of all kinds, including ABE, serve at most three million people in America. Meanwhile, at least that many new illiterates are coming out of public school each year in the U.S.

In the face of this, the volunteers sent out by Mrs. Bush are limitlessly praised in press reports. A typical newspaper story on what I call, perhaps ungenerously, "The Barbara Bush Brigade," describes an affluent white lady (I mean it's usually not an ordinary person, it's usually somebody very, very wealthy), tutoring a poor black man. I mean, it's like a metaphor for the British Empire in the days of Cecil Rhodes. You could see the wife of the Viceroy patting a little black child on the head in Rhodesia, or something like that. These are the stories—a very rich white lady tutoring a poor black man. Never in his neighborhood; always in an antiseptic neutral location. Always in a one-to-one arrangement where her social class authority is uncontested; never in a group where learners might have reinforced each other. Always with simplistic phonics primers of a juvenilizing nature; never with the strong, suggestive words that might enable learners to achieve an adult sensibility.

The essence of these programs is perpetual subordination. Those who work within them may be decent people, many of them are. There are a lot of nice republicans in America, but they are incapable of fostering empowerment to challenge the prevailing status quo because that status quo has been so good to them. There are ugly contradictions to the same extremely wealthy people who attend these endless luncheons and tea parties in New York to raise the money to recruit their friends to volunteer; those who vote consistently against the very programs—preschool, health care, desegregated housing and schools—that would, of course, make volunteers like them unnecessary.

Injustice is the groundwork, the precondition for their charity, an injustice they relentlessly perpetuate. I mean, there are terrific volunteers in America. The closer you get to the grassroots, the more terrific the people are, but the whole tone of it is dominated by these lady bountifuls out of the 19th century. It's as though there never was a Civil Rights Movement in America. It's as though nothing had happened since the days of Queen Victoria. Queen Victoria would probably be embarrassed by the maudlin nature of these programs. She was smart.

An awful lot of the people who dominate the upper levels of the movement in the U.S. are frankly not simply wealthy and conservative, but extreme right wing. The most fanatical group in the literacy movement in America is a group out in Phoenix, Arizona. I don't know why, but Phoenix seems to be a hotbed of right wing eccentricity. I struck on these folks because at some point a couple of years ago I said something good about phonics. You know, I am all in favor of phonics. I don't want you to misunderstand that—a good short "o" or long "e"—there's nothing obnoxious about that, nothing republican about it as far as I'm concerned. I said something good about a phonics method I had used and I immediately was adopted by these superrich people in Phoenix who started writing to me, calling me, praising me effusively, had me out there and disregarded everything else I said except this one thing about phonics. Now, I call these people the Phonetic Fanatics—I mean this is their whole thing. There would be nothing wrong with this, it would just be an amusing eccentricity, if the same people were not consistently the folks who opposed women's rights, preschool for poor black children and consistently even opposed things like water fluoridation. I mean there's a real crank quality to it.

The same general trend that I described in the U.S. has now been seen in England. I was in London last summer where Mrs. Thatcher has pursued the same agenda as Mr. Bush and Mr. Reagan. Because the leaders of your nation and my own are now so close, I suspect in time you will see it here, even in Canada, admittedly a less benighted nation than my own, but one in which the same dynamics ultimately prevail.

I want to end by taking you with me on a journey to show you what it is I am dealing with. I go to any place people will listen to me. I am not a kneejerk radical who just shuts out everybody who doesn't agree with me. If so, in the United States these days I would be talking to myself. The nation has never been so conservative as it is today. I am not a nasty person. I know I joke and sometimes can be a little harsh. I am basically polite enough, so a lot of groups, even very conservative groups, invite me to speak—until they hear me; and then they never invite me back.

One of these groups asked me to Texas last year, and I have to share this with you because this will sum up or crystallize the real challenge that we are facing in the U.S.A. I was asked to speak at a major literacy event in Texas—I am not going to name the city, but it was one of the big cities in Texas. I knew they were very conservative republicans, oil people, oil millionaires and real estate millionaires. I thought, "Well, still they asked me to speak, so they are probably pretty open minded or willing to hear." Before I spoke they had a cocktail party for me. Now, I have to set the scene. It didn't real-

ly take place in the city. It took place in a suburb, but the suburb was in the middle of the city—this is an unusual phenomenon. In Texas there are suburbs in the midst of cities or on the edges of cities, which are basically incorporated separately in order to keep them all white and so it's not segregated. There are just no black people or Hispanic people there. That's where this party took place and where I was speaking.

The party was in someone's home. I have seen wealthy people, of course; where I live in New England there are plenty of rich people, but I have never seen anything like this in my life. These are the wealthiest people I have ever met. There was a river behind this house, and I said to someone at the cocktail party, "I didn't know there were any rivers in this part of Texas," and she said, "Oh, there aren't; he built that river." And it was a real river. You know, it had currents; it was a real river. I know people have ponds. Even I could have a pond; I could dig a little pond, but this was a river with currents. The homes in the area were worth \$4 to \$8 million typically. It was a big crowd; there were about 1,000 couples there.

Another thing about it that was strange was the role of the women because most of the women I know, like most of you, are active people who do things in the world. I have been well indoctrinated by all the women I know about the important leadership role of women in most of the activities that matter to me, like education. This was different. This was like something from a different world—all the men were doing things. You could tell this because everyone had badges—you know at parties how they stick things on your lapel that say, "Hi, I'm Jack," that kind of thing. All the men—their badges said what they did. It would have his name and then it would say that he owns a bank or the world, or something that would tell what he did, but the women's badges almost consistently said "Spouse."

I had never been in a setting like that before. The men all looked kind of the same. They all had these same three piece blue suits; they all had silvery grey hair; they all looked distinguished. I wish I could look like that. And the women, also, kind of looked the same. A lot of them had on big hats, like old fashioned Gibson Girl hats—anyone here old enough to remember what I mean? And big earrings, big, big earrings. The biggest earrings I had ever seen. I thought of them as Texas earrings—like chandeliers. It was just a different world for me. It was like being in an old Doris Day movie or something like that.

They were nice to me, at first. We had some drinks and I was thinking to myself, "Well, these are very conservative republicans." I realized that because these people really admired not just President Bush, but they really admired Vice-President Quayle as well, not just polite-

ly. Many republicans in America say, "Well, he's the Vice-President, so say something nice about him," but these people really—they think he's smart and they admire him. On the other hand they were very warm to me, so I thought, "Well, these must be the real good republicans, and these people like me so I am going to tell them the truth and hope that they'll pass it on, and they'll go to George Bush and Mrs. Bush and lobby for some good things."

So standing there with a drink in my hand, I started getting up my nerve after I had a sip of it and I said, "Listen, here you are. You're spending all this money for this incredible party, you've brought me down here all the way from Boston and you obviously care about this stuff. You want to volunteer for literacy." Many of them also volunteered in homeless shelters—they'd bring cookies and stuff like that. Occasionally a church would bring food to a homeless shelter or something like that.

I said, "If that's how you feel, how about helping to get at the root of these problems so we wouldn't be needed?" They looked sort of startled at me as though they didn't know what I really meant and I said, "Well, how about this. How about pushing hard for universal health care for poor children and mothers in America?" We don't have that yet in the United States, as you well know. We envy Canada very much in that respect. And some of the women said, "Well, obviously that's important." I said, "It's very important. In many of our big cities we have not just infant death rates, but infant disability rates due to damage in the womb, which are worse than in countries like Costa Rica and Honduras," and they agreed that was important. I said, "How about pushing hard and asking President Bush if he would restore the billions of dollars that his predecessor cut from all those health programs?" There were some good programs for children which had been disseminated under President Reagan. Right away I saw this funny look in their eyes.

They stepped away from me a little bit, and one woman said, "Do you really think that spending money is the answer to this?" I said, "I don't know. It seems to me like it's a good way to do it," but right away I switched to something else. I asked, "What about preschool for all low income kids in America?" We have an American program called Head Start which started long ago under President John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. It's preschool for very low income children, but it serves only about 20 per cent of children who are eligible, purely a lack of money. It's a federal program. And the present administration and the previous one have refused to fund it to give it to all poor children.

I said to these women, "Don't you think preschool is important?" and they all agreed with me; all their kids

were in preschool. They said, "Oh, it's very important." I said, "Where do your children go?" They all went to these lovely little Montessori preschools and these beautiful innovative schools, and they wanted to take me to see them. They were so naive. It didn't occur to them that I would be angry. Do you see what I mean? It didn't occur to them that the better their preschool, the angrier I would be because the poor kids who needed it more didn't have it. I said gently, "Wouldn't it be nice to share that with poor children?" And they said, "Oh yes, it would be nice." And I said, "Well, would you talk to President Bush about that? Wouldn't it be good if all children could have that in America?" And it began.

This woman narrowed her eyes, and now I could see they were really sizing me up, "Oh oh, this liberal from Boston is going to cause us trouble." Not exactly like that, but they were beginning to narrow their eyes and to look at me a little bit, sort of like anthropologists examining a nearly extinct species. A woman said to me, "It is true that preschool Head Start is good for children, but do we really want federal answers to local problems?" I didn't know what to say. I said, "Well, how about more money for adult basic education?" Same answer. And then she added, "As soon as the bureaucrats get into it, everything is ruined." That was their answer to adult basic education, as simple as that.

I know and you know that there are lots of bureaucrats in ABE, like in all programs, but they have plenty of bureaucrats in the banking industry too. They started telling me how much money is wasted in adult basic education. I said, "Well a lot of money is wasted in the S & L industry in the United States, too. A lot more." Do you know what I am referring to? A major crisis in America—banking industry poorly supervised, and it costs us millions of dollars. I could see the dual arguments here were money, but particularly federal interference, that they didn't like; so at that point I switched gears and I decided to attack them on the home front, and I did it this way. I said, "Listen, forget about Washington, forget about federal bureaucrats. Let's talk about something local, right here in Texas."

At that moment there happened to be a heated battle in Texas over school inequality because as it turned out the poorer school districts in Texas were getting only \$2,000 per child while the richest districts, like the one in which I was standing at that moment, were spending up to \$12,000 for each child. Just the money they spent depended on how rich the people were in the communities. There was a battle to equalize the funding so I said to them, "Let's forget about the federal government, all that socialist stuff in Washington, forget it. Let's just talk about Texas. How about equalizing the schools here so that every child would get the same shot, starting from the bottom. How do you feel about

that?" They were against it, naturally. I said to them, "Wait a minute. How could you be against it?" By then I had had another drink. I said, "You want to go and tutor these people. You want to help them. You go when they can't read enough to hold a job that earns enough to pay the rent, and they end up in a homeless shelter. You want to bring cookies to the homeless shelter; why not give them a decent education from the start? Forget about Washington, just make it fair play in Texas."

A woman looked me right in the eye and she said, "Jonathan, do you really think that money is the issue in education?" I asked, "What do you mean?" She replied, "Do you really believe that spending more money in a big city in Texas is going to raise their reading levels?" I said, "Well, it would pay for a lot more teachers, smaller classes, more reading materials, more counsellors, air conditioning, lots of pleasant things, computers." She asserted, "I don't think that money is the issue." I retorted, "You don't think that your children in this white suburb are getting something more for \$12,000 a year than those poor kids are getting for \$2,000 a year?" "Nope," she said. "Then you must be crazy," I said. "Why are you wasting all that money then?" They were offended by that, as you can imagine. I said "Why would you throw away \$12,000 a year if you could get the same thing for \$2,000? Think what you could do with that money. You could go to a big department store; think of how many earrings you could buy, think of how many rivers you could build, why are you wasting all that money?"

They thought I was joking at that point and they just smiled at me. I asked, "Why do you think those poor kids in the city do so poorly?" She said to me, "It's not money; money is not the reason." I asked, "What is the reason?" She replied, "Values." I asked, "Whose values? The children's values?" "No," she said, "their parents'. The values of the parents are what determines a child's success." I retorted, "You really don't think that the money difference matters?" She said, "No, I don't." I said, "Listen. If you honestly don't believe that your kids are getting anything better for \$12,000 a year than those poor kids are getting for \$2,000, I have a deal for you."

They looked frightened then. I said, "Next September when school starts, here's what I suggest. You send your kids to the crowded, ugly, squalid, miserable schools in the inner cities and let those kids come out here to your schools because their parents for some naive reason think that money matters, so why not indulge them? Their parents somehow think that for all that extra money they could really have smaller classes. They think that computers really cost money. They think that for twice as high a salary, you can get a better teacher. They really think that. You know it's not

true, so why not indulge them, at least it will improve race relations? Besides," I said, "your children wouldn't lose anything by going to a poor school would they? Because you had the values." At that point, you can imagine how they felt. I hadn't given my speech yet; this was just a cocktail party.

Well, to wind this up, we then adjourned to a huge auditorium, bigger than this, and I gave my talk. It was one of those fancy dinners and the talk was at the end of dinner. By the time I got to speak they were finishing dessert, and they turned down all the lights in the room so you really couldn't see anything except the candle on each table, a flickering candle.

I stood up to speak, and I really was angry; I couldn't be polite. I was thinking of all the kids I knew, like that boy I told you about in New York, Richard, who, for no reason at all but the accident of birth was denied all the things which their children took for granted. And I got up, very angry and I said, "Listen, folks, here you are in this wealthy, segregated community and you vote against health care for the poor children, you vote against preschool for these children, you vote against federal literacy funds for these children, and then when you have the chance here in your own state of Texas to equalize their schools, you vote against that also. You deny them everything your children take for granted. And then when they are adults and ruined and broken and defeated, then you want to go in and pat them on the head and be their literacy tutor and feel real good about yourself. And when they are homeless you want to bring cookies to the shelter." I was so angry I said, "You should keep away from these people. Don't touch them, don't get near them. You are their enemy."

There was a withering silence in the room, as you can imagine. I wanted so much to see their faces to see how they had reacted, but I couldn't see because it was dark, the whole room was dark. I looked out into the room and I couldn't see a thing except these candles flickering on each table and glittering in the earrings of these ladies. That's all I could see in the whole room—a glitter of candles and earrings. I thought to myself, "Now I know what George Bush means by 'The Thousand Points of Light.' Now I understand it. It's the earrings of the rich women whose husbands vote against every form of basic elemental justice, and then they want to bring them cookies to the homeless shelter."

When I got back from Texas, I immediately called Mike Fox, somebody you met last night who spoke here, and some of my other allies. I went over to talk with people in the black community, and I reread Paulo Freire. I got out an old copy of a black American author, Frederick Douglas, a man who was born a slave and taught himself to read, turned a word into a weapon that led to the abolition of slavery in the United States. I needed something to recharge my soul. I marked out these words from Frederick Douglas which I have reread many times. "Those," he said, "who profess to favor justice, yet deplore agitation, are people who want crops without plowing the ground. They want rain," he said, "without thunder. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its mighty waters. Power," he said, "concedes nothing without demand. It never did. It never will."

I want to end this on a realistic note. I know that your jobs are terribly hard, and I know that the day-to-day demands oblige us all sometimes to compromise with our ideals. I know the mere routine of work is often overwhelming and leaves little time to think of larger goals like what I've talked about tonight. I also know that many people working as you do in the vineyards do not like to hear about a larger struggle. It offends them. Sometimes it even threatens them a bit because it seems to dwarf their efforts. I don't want to do this.

Every decent struggle is made up of tiny details, day-to-day routines, many inconspicuous and frequently unheralded endeavors. The ordinary teachers who work hard from day to day; who stick it out without much praise; who find their best reward within the eyes and growing strength of those they teach; who do not speak of politics as I do, but are political by every liquid in their eyes, by every intonation of their voice; who cherish freedom and regard the literacy task in much the same way Frederick Douglas viewed the end of slavery; who want the rain and welcome the thunder; who want the ocean and do not fear the roaring of its waves—these are the people I admire most. These are the people who redeem a nation's soul.

There are hundreds and hundreds of such people here in Edmonton and in Alberta, and many of them are here with us today, and I salute you. I wish you strength and nerve, courage, and irreverence, persistence and survival.

Keynote—Hon. John Gogo

Let me say at the outset how impressed I am with the dedication of all of those who are not only involved in literacy but, more importantly, concerned about literacy. What I want to share with you this morning is what we in Alberta have been doing with regard to this whole question of adult learning and that we seem to spend a lot of time using the word "literacy."

The other night I met Gordon Selman who is the synthesizer for this conference, and he said to me, "John, if you can pronounce the word 'synthesizer' you are probably at the wrong conference," and I think there's probably a lot to that. I am looking forward to his report at the conclusion, when he wraps up.

A few months ago I was at Alberta Vocational College, Edmonton, which was celebrating its 25th Anniversary, a quarter century of public service. They, along with Vocational College Lesser Slave Lake, Lac La Biche, Calgary, Grant MacEwan and other institutions have been committed to this whole question of adult learning. I recall vividly at the graduation a 72-year-old lady making a comment to me which really restored my faith in those who are volunteers and professionals in the whole area of literacy. She told me about the magic of reading, and how she had gone so many years without being able to read and hence not being able to understand.

I thought of this Tuesday night when we watched the video of Paulo Freire. I must confess, I had some difficulty understanding what that was all about until I realized and understood that the whole question from the point of view of the learner is the empathy, the understanding, and the caring of the teacher. I guess one has to experience from within the ability to communicate with somebody else. But I remember this 72-year-old lady telling me the magic of reading and what it meant to her. Little did I dream that we have almost 200,000 people in Alberta who by definition, and I frankly have some trouble with definitions, are functionally illiterate. There's got to be a tremendous number who have never discovered the magic of reading, but spend their time at television. The lady was telling me that she watched a lot of television, but she really couldn't remember the programs she had watched even a week earlier. But since she'd learned to read she had learned to understand and discovered the magic, as I call it, of reading and being able to travel the world through reading, something that she'd never been able to do in almost three score years and ten.

I walked away from that graduation with Dr. Mike Andrews, the President of AVC, who is here along with

many others, and I said to myself, "If nothing else were accomplished, you've brought into that person's life not only a ray of hope, not only a feeling of accomplishment, but if that person only lives by the Canadian average for another 10 years, those teachers in adult learning have accomplished a miracle—the miracle of being able to read." So I said to myself, "There's something special about those involved in the whole area of teaching; teaching those who are not able at the outset to learn to read." Whether you are a Mike Andrews and are turned on by Plato or Pluto or Socrates, or whether you are someone who just reads for enjoyment, or to understand, to learn, or to be amused, I don't care which it is, but that single day, Dr. Andrews, your institution taught me a whole new understanding of literacy.

Not long ago, the world's knowledge was doubling every five years. Recently at a convocation over at the University, the President maintained that whatever students had learned in their three, four or five years, in five years would be out of date. Much of what I am about to say I am sure you already know; however, now the rate of knowledge is doubling every 22 months. I was astounded to learn recently that in Alberta, which I assume is similar to other parts of Canada, for four out of every 10 children in grade 4 in our elementary schools, their job has yet to be invented. That's how rapidly we are changing in our society and how quickly knowledge is changing.

As we proceed through the '90s we will be seeing the greying of the population. I guess that's people like me in the labor force, and a maturing baby boom generation. Labor force growth in Canada, which was expanding at levels of 3.5% in the '70s, will decline to about 1% by 1995. I think these facts are extremely important to you in your business. Skilled labor will be at a premium and our society will be forced to turn to underutilized labor pools, those with low or limited basic skills. That may be the thrust as an extension of the free trade agreement to include Mexico; I don't know.

In the past literacy was a matter of social concern and social policy. In the '90s, however, literacy will no longer just be a social issue, but also one of economics with the full use of our labor force as a central theme.

We in Alberta are not only strongly committed to the whole question of adult learning and literacy, but we spend a lot of money on it. For more than 45 years, that's since the end of the second war roughly, the Alberta Government has recognized the importance of vocational training, and for more than 25 years the im-

portance of literacy and academic upgrading. For example, since the mid '40s, Alberta has signed numerous cost-shared agreements with the government of Canada for vocational training, something I think everybody knows. These programs are now administered by Alberta Career Development and Employment and include extensive funding to support learners while they are enrolled in these special programs. And you will find them at many institutions such as Grant MacEwan and the vocational colleges.

In 1965, if my recollection serves me right, the United Nations dealt with the question of literacy. Back as far as 1965, the Alberta Vocational Colleges were established to provide vocational, academic upgrading and literacy programs for Albertans. In the last 10 years alone, the four AVCs administered by my department, Advanced Education, have provided programming for more than 195,000 people, truly an achievement. Since 1980, my department has supported numerous volunteer tutored literacy projects and presently my department is supporting 55 projects involving about 4,000 participants of which about half are adult learners. In addition an extensive literacy program has been offered by the Alberta Correspondence Schools and the extension policy of Alberta Education.

As mentioned the other night, we have some 85 further education councils in Alberta, as well as the five consortia, in addition to the 28 postsecondary institutions. During the 1990 fiscal year, the Alberta Government will spend a total of \$90 million in both literacy programming and support, truly a commitment by a province with less than 10% of Canada's people. The literacy survey conducted by Statistics Canada shows that the government literacy efforts are really paying dividends. According to this survey, Alberta ranked highest of all the provinces in Canada in numeracy, and second highest in reading skills, 72% and 71%, respectively, as compared to the national average of 62% on both. Now, Mr. Chairman, I think that is testament to the dedication and commitment of those in Alberta involved in adult upgrading and literacy.

We've been attempting to develop a policy on literacy for some time. If you understand the structure of government and the committees that deal with this, I think you would have an appreciation for what we have been going through because literacy is not a simple subject. My concern as Minister is training and adult upgrading—to see that those Albertans who don't have the basic skills to achieve a reasonable standard of living receive all the help that is necessary to do it, but there is a lot of work yet to be done. With the changing demographics and globalization of our economy, the framework for a literacy policy that takes us into the 21st century and beyond is required. This policy should set a clear direction for the way Alberta

government reviews, coordinates and provides programs and services to adult learners with low or limited basic skills.

I am pleased to inform you that a literacy policy known as the Foundations for Adult Learning and Development, an Alberta policy which does just that, is now being reviewed by my colleagues. So we are very close to the formation of the policy. It confirms the government's commitment to the provision of programs, access to programs, financial support, partnership amongst the public, private and voluntary sectors of our society, and promotion of the concept of adult learning and development. An important aspect of any policy is obtaining agreement regarding the terms of usage. In the context of a policy about literacy, agreement, believe it or not, is required as to the meaning of the word "literacy." First and foremost, I, as Minister, have some serious reservations about using the words illiterate and illiteracy. These words have such negative connotations that like acid eat away at the confidence on which the ability to read and write relies. I can relate to those people who look at themselves in a negative way because of the use, by many of us, of words like illiterate and illiteracy.

As was mentioned, I just returned from a UNESCO Conference at Geneva which dealt with education. While I was there I discovered a poem in a UNESCO publication from a Third World country which I found very interesting, and I want to repeat it to you now. The poem was written by a woman living in poverty, and in this poem she says:

We are poor, very poor, but we are not stupid. That is why despite our illiteracy, we still exist but we have to know why we should become literate. We will agree to join literacy classes if you teach us how not to depend on others any more.

Just visualize that woman in the Third World country with five children and all the things that she has to go through daily just to survive. It would take a lot to convince her to take valuable time out of her day to attend classes on what we call literacy. So that's another side to what I gathered the other night when our distinguished professor from Washington explained that you have to know from within yourself how you can impart to others, if you are going to convince a woman like that. I am sure you know many people in our society who have survived and managed to hide their literacy problem from others. The famous program with Dennis Weaver, I guess, is a classic example. However, they are not being as productive as they might be. In a global economy, Alberta would need more and more of these people to be as economically productive as possible. I don't like to relate the whole question to programs that are economically viable and productive, but as a mem-

ber of a government that is constantly trying to find dollars to allocate to programs, we've got to find ways of having our people generate income in order that we can fund our social programs.

Does the use of the word "illiterate" or "illiteracy" help our cause? Do these words do anything to explain to a person why they should become literate? Do these words explain how a person won't have to depend on others any more? Surely the answer is a resounding No. So what, then, is literacy?

I am among professionals and, ladies and gentlemen, I understand this audience. I am not the expert; I am here to learn. But strictly speaking, literacy means, the ability to read and write. However in today's fast changing world, literacy is a much more dynamic concept. Literacy changes the social values, economic demands and educational expectations. It is no longer a one-time event. For example, a grade eight education might have led a 1940s worker to expect secure employment and social acceptance, however, that same worker in the 1990s is labelled and negatively stereotyped. I can think of an example in northern Alberta. When you want to clear a road allowance, just cutting brush down, the company that wins the contract insists on a grade twelve educational standard. I mean, what does that tell us? Does that tell us we understand society? What on earth does a grade twelve education have to do with clearing brush at the side of the road? Unless you are going to use equipment that because of its technological nature, maintenance requirements, or operational manual requires a grade twelve education. Now we don't often equate those things.

I look at those in the north and what Keyano College does in terms of its Heavy Equipment Program. They deal with equipment costing between \$200,000 and \$300,000 and no longer can you take someone off the street who doesn't have the ability to understand and comprehend, let alone to read technical manuals in order to maintain the equipment. I understand that; those days are behind us. That's why when we deal with populations in the north, adult upgrading becomes so critically important. I don't think everybody understands that. So you cannot expect an employer to employ somebody on expensive equipment unless they can understand; and hence the importance of AVC Lesser Slave Lake. In today's economic environment, literacy cannot be solved by deciding on how many people with limited basic skills there are and by forcing them into classrooms until they can meet minimum expectations for reading and writing. Virtually all universal measures of literacy based on school completion or on tests of basic literacy competence serve only to oversimplify complex issues.

Robertson Davies, who is well known to many of you I think says that in today's environment there may be three levels of literacy. Level one are people we associate with literacy problems. The people who are shut off from everything that requires understanding of even quite simple things that are written down. Number two are people who can read and write and are technically skilled and can deal with complexity. Many are professionals. That reminds me of the Southam study, obviously, where university graduates failed. These people have good vocabularies, but have focused too narrowly. Number three are people who have used the written word to extend their personal knowledge in a way that goes far beyond the other two. They are people who add to the knowledge base of the whole world. In my opinion, Mr. Davies has much to say to all of us.

Literacy has a direct impact on our ability to imagine how things might be different. How reminiscent of the late Robert F. Kennedy.

If we focus too narrowly, we could end up like the wealthy 55-year-old executive who was miserable despite his financial success. He came to see the late Morley Callaghan complaining that he didn't have time enough to read any more: "I used to read all the time, he lamented. When I was in college I was crazy about Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Sherwin Anderson. What happened to me?" Callaghan's diagnosis was quite straightforward, "Sir, you've let your imagination wither and die. You've become old of heart."

Well, it seems to me that those of us who think we've arrived are at the point where, to quote Mr. John Naisbitt, who's probably written more about the information society than anybody else, "Those of us who become dependent on technology and have lost the imagination and the desire to read, frankly are being very disappointing to ourselves."

Literacy is not a one-time event. As Davies and Callaghan suggest, literacy is a continuum. At any point in our lives all of us can place ourselves somewhere on that continuum: the lady who wrote the poem I quoted, adult Albertans with limited basic skills, and everyone gathered here today for this conference. At one end of the continuum there's a level of ability so minimal as to be unmeasurable, at the other end the ability to enlarge human knowledge. Arbitrary standards of literacy really become irrelevant.

Let me conclude, then, on these notes. The Foundation for Adult Learning and Development, an Alberta Policy, forms a foundation for literacy action, and action is the operative word, with financial commitment for Alberta in the next century. The policy assures that adult learners who most need training will be able to

gain access both to the learning environment and the learning opportunities they need to change and improve their lives. Furthermore, the policy recognizes that literacy is no longer just an educational issue, but an economic issue. In a global economy Alberta will have no choice but to make the best possible use of its resources, including its people, or simply be left behind.

Now I want to close on what I think is a humorous note. I have always been a strong believer in the whole area of common sense and commonsense approaches. I often think that in our desire to serve and the desire to become better educated in the classical sense, we seem to think we have to become more and more complex, and we forget some of the very great fundamentals. I think it is important for us to remember that caring for people is probably one of the greatest things we can do, and having empathy for people is a great way of achieving it.

Keeping things in their simple form that I would deem common sense has never gone out of style. A recent event in my community brought this home to me when a schoolteacher took a group of seven-year-olds, grade one students, around the city of Lethbridge to familiarize them with the city. She took them to the grain elevators at Alberta Terminals Ltd. and showed

them how grain was lifted up and how it ended up going into freight cars. She took them to the fire hall and explained, not in a very good way, why fire trucks were now yellow instead of red, and about the whole role of a fire department. Then she took them to the police station and the police sergeant showed these seven-year-olds around the police station. He showed them the cells, showed them the police cars with the fancy radar equipment and the radio equipment. At the conclusion of this tour, the police sergeant asked, "Do you have any questions?" A seven-year-old responded, "What are all those pictures you have on the wall there?" And the police sergeant said, "Oh, they are pictures of Canada's 10 most wanted criminals." And the seven-year-old said, "You mean you are trying to catch them?" And the sergeant said, "You bet we are trying to catch them." To which the seven-year-old, in all his innocence and common sense, replied, "Well, why didn't you just keep them when you took their picture?"

Ladies and gentlemen, believe me, as intriguing and as complex as literacy is, there is still the rule that common sense applies. So, congratulations, Chairman Pat, on having a successful conference. I want you to know how strong I feel to those of you who are dedicated to improving the peoples' lives. Good luck to you all and God bless you.

Peter Calamai

We were very careful in most of the study to refer to literacy, rather than illiteracy. After I finished doing the work for the newspaper and went away for what I thought was a well-deserved rest, a couple of editors put this together into a booklet and they managed to put the word "illiterate" on the cover, a source of some amusement.

In the debate about whether or not illiteracy has such terrible connotations that it should be retired as a word and some other words should be substituted for it, I am reminded of a Duffy cartoon which I think appeared here again just the other day in the *Edmonton Journal*. It showed Duffy in his office at the business he works at with his terribly messy desk and someone says, "The only problem with you, Duffy, is you are a slob," and Duffy says, "No, I'm not a slob. I'm just organizationally challenged." I can understand that.

Now, I met some of you last night at the Medieval Banquet, but I didn't meet all of you. So I would like to ask a few questions so I can get a better sense of the audience. I know this is turning the tables a bit on people who are involved in instruction, but let me do it anyhow.

I presume that almost everybody in this audience knows that there are between four and five million Canadians who have trouble with reading, writing or numbers. Am I right about that? All right. I assumed that was the case. How many people in this audience have actually convinced someone else of those facts? Marvellous.

Next question: How many people in this audience have written letters to the editor or appeared on radio phone-in programs or on cable television or written articles for some community newspaper about this literacy problem? Great. How many people here have gotten others to volunteer to be literacy tutors? Fantastic. And how many people here have lobbied, either in the place where they work or in the community where they live, for some sort of workplace literacy or skills upgrading program?

Now, another question and just a few follow-ups to it. How many people know or have heard that between 30 and 35% of students in Canada who enter kindergarten don't finish grade eight? And how many know that of the people who have graduated from grade eight in the 1980s, about one in eight, according to the Southam definition, are functionally illiterate?

And, lastly, how many people know that the written vocabulary of nine- to 14-year-olds, admittedly a wide

range in ages, dropped from 25,000 words in 1945 to 10,000 words in the 1980s? A couple. Now, I find these figures, all of them, disturbing and I presume, once again, that since you have been so good about passing on the information generally about literacy that you have probably been very good about passing on the information about these figures, the education figures.

Now, just one further set of questions. How many people can name their school trustee? And how many people here have ever looked at a grade three reader from the 1940s and compared it to a grade three reader today? Marvellous.

I wasn't asking these questions to bully you because I haven't done a lot of that stuff myself. I certainly haven't done as much of it as some of the people in this audience have. In most audiences you wouldn't get that sort of response rate. But I asked them because I am increasingly convinced that what some people call the higher order skills, in terms of literacy—reading, writing and numeracy—are what the future demands of people in this country.

As an example of that trend, let me quote from an article which appeared recently in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*: "When the Helsinki Library decided to list its holdings on a computer, a microfilm of that card catalogue was flown to the Philippines where data operators in Manila keyed in the titles. In Sydney, Australia a specialized company transposed the list into a format compatible with a Canadian database in Toronto, which contained citations for most world book titles, thus reducing the number that had to be keyed in by hand. Titles that weren't in the Toronto file went back to Manila for full keying. A processing facility in Dayton, Ohio converted the completed list into the finished library classification system and the final editing was done in London and Ardrossan, Scotland, and all that was to get the Helsinki Library's holdings onto computer."

Now, in my view, if we only ask for basic literacy in our society, then your children and my children will be the ones who are doing the key punching, not the ones doing the programming. I may have gotten a bit ahead of myself, so I am going to backtrack a bit. I am going to tell you how I got interested in literacy, how really terrible I think the literacy situation is in Canada, the literacy balance, what's been done about it since the Southam Study in 1987, and what hasn't been done about it, some pointers towards solutions, and why I think the time is terribly short. At the end of that I am

hoping to leave you with three themes: awareness, accountability, and action.

How did Southam come to do the literacy survey? Well, I must first give credit to Audrey Thomas, who is listed in the program and I presume is here at the conference from Victoria. Using census figures and grade completion levels she came up with the figure of around four million Canadians who were defined as "functionally illiterate" because they had not completed eight years of schooling, which was UNESCO's definition for "functionally illiterate."

Some of the people in my news organization suspected that this was exaggerating the problem and that people like yourselves involved in literacy were using these figures to hype the issue of literacy, that it wasn't really this severe a problem, and I was asked to do a series of articles about literacy. I did what any well-informed award-winning journalist would do—I went to the library and I tried to crib the stuff out of the clippings. As I did so, I found that all the figures in all of the stories in all of the libraries all went back to Audrey Thomas' report, and this definition that if you had eight years of schooling you were functionally illiterate and if you didn't you weren't functionally literate. Audrey Thomas and I and everybody else in this room know that that is nonsense.

With my heart in my mouth I went to the powers of Southam and said, "I can turn out some stories about literacy with no trouble, but they are all based on this great big lie, and I think what we should do is to find out whether we really do have a literacy problem in Canada. The only way to do that is to administer proficiency tests, real-life literacy exercises to a large enough sample of people in the country so that we can make some conclusions." They asked, "What will that cost?" And I said, "I don't have a clue." I went out and found out that it would only cost about \$150,000 and they said "Fine, we'll do it." Now the final bill was \$300,000, which will show you why I'm not in senior management in the Southam Company, but we did the survey.

The findings, if you don't mind my talking about them because I want to contrast them later to something else, were that 24% of Canadians were functionally illiterate. I don't want to go into how we came up with the definition of what constitutes a functionally illiterate person—it's in the report; it's quite complicated and we think quite fair, but there's certainly grounds for argument about it. I wouldn't defend it as being the be all and end all.

Among people who were born in Canada, the rate of functional illiteracy was 22%, and that correlated positively with education. In areas where you had higher education, you had lower illiteracy. There was also a direct correlation with high school completion;

dropouts had a higher rate of functional illiteracy than did high school graduates. As the Minister pointed out, quite surprisingly, 5% of Canadian-born university graduates, 7% of all university graduates rated as tionally illiterate.

The findings also correlated with socioeconomic status as far as we were able to determine it. All we had to go by was what the people we interviewed told us about what their parents had done for a living—it was a bit difficult and sort of a second-best measurement. We also had what they told us their incomes were, which again was a second-best measurement. It definitely correlated with whether there had been a literate environment in the homes of people when they were brought up, with how many books they had in their homes, whether they remembered being read to as a child, whether there was a typewriter, whether there was an encyclopedia—those sorts of surrogate measurements of a literate environment.

One in seven people who were in the work force had some severe literacy problem. Most people who were functionally illiterate were getting by; they weren't basket cases, but they were obviously going nowhere. Maybe they were clearing brush, but they never thought that they would be the foreman of the gang that was clearing the brush. There was a French-English difference in terms of literacy, primarily with the older people when it correlated with not going to school in Quebec in the '30s and '40s. It evened out with the youngest age group, the 18-34 age group. Between Canadian and American 18- to-24-year-olds there was really no discernible difference. If anything, the Americans were slightly better than the Canadians.

Now, a lot of these results have engendered a fair amount of discussion, most of which I was able to miss because I moved to Washington right after the report came out and stayed there for the next two years and three months. I think if we can take credit for anything, it is that we probably destroyed completely the idea of grade levels being used as a measurement for literacy. We certainly gave credence to the idea that one should look at what sort of reading, writing and numeracy tests people have to face in everyday life. That's what matters, whether they can do those sorts of things, not textbook types of things.

What was the aftermath from the Southam study? Well, shortly afterwards, in February 1988, the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy, which had started its work before our survey was reported, published a study that was done for them by Woods-Gordon based on all sorts of assumptions. The study said that the direct cost to Canada of these low literacy rates was about \$4 billion a year, and the indirect cost could be as high as \$10 billion a year. Those were useful as order of

magnitude measurements, but not much else. In June of 1988 at the Economic Summit in Toronto which I attended, Prime Minister Mulroney called for collective political action by the seven most powerful western nations on the subject of literacy, thereby putting it on a higher world agenda than it had been on for some time. In September of 1988 the Federal Government announced that it was making the National Literacy Secretary a permanent feature, and it was going to be funded with \$25 million a year over the next five years, an order of magnitude increase over anything that had been done federally for literacy funding.

During 1989 a group called the Public Policy Forum held a series of sessions across the country with private business, trying to get them to develop a strategy for literacy. All sorts of industry groups became involved that hadn't been involved before, who before had said there wasn't a problem. The Conference Board of Canada worked on the survey, parts of which have come out this year which show that personnel managers realize they have severe literacy problems in the work place.

Most importantly, from my point of view, Statistics Canada conducted its survey of the reading, writing and numeracy skills of 9,500 Canadians. Now, we surveyed 2,400 Canadians, at a cost of \$300,000, and we are a private industry; so you won't be surprised that to do four times as many cost the government \$2 million. Now, the Minister alluded to some of the Statistics Canada results; I am going to go through some of them in more detail. Only two thirds of the people born in Canada have sufficient reading skills to be able to handle all everyday readings tasks. Only 63% of people born in Canada have sufficient numeracy skills to be able to handle everyday arithmetic tasks, just adding and subtracting numbers and figuring out the tip on a restaurant bill.

I think that one of the reasons why the government was a bit gun-shy about these results was because they gave a new meaning to the phrase "distinct society." Francophones are much less literate than Anglophones. Of people born in Canada, 70% of Anglophones are able to handle all everyday reading chores. They have what Stats. Canada calls level four literacy; they can handle everything, they don't shy away from anything. They don't go out and read Socrates, but they can handle everything from a newspaper to a bus schedule. Among Francophones the figure is only 57%.

Statistics Canada hasn't done the tertiary analysis, but I predict that when they do they will find out that the gap exists mostly among older people and that it disappears in the younger age cohorts. Where it may be even more troubling is that there may be cultural differences in numeracy. The gap in reading skills was just a gap of

13%; the gap in numeracy is larger than that. Statistics Canada never published the size of the gap because they were afraid there may be a cultural bias involved in the questions. One of the questions on the numeracy test, for instance, was to fill out a bank deposit slip. I don't know how many people in this room have banked at the Caisse Populaire, but you don't fill out the same sort of bank deposit slip that you fill out at the Bank of Nova Scotia. So it may have been that there was a cultural bias in that question. But even allowing for a cultural bias, a difference of 20 percentage points between Anglophones and Francophones when it comes to numeracy is deeply disturbing, probably something that would not disappear once you did the age cohort comparison.

The second reason why I think the Stats. Canada results are deeply embarrassing to governments is that they prove that the second most expensive educational system in the world has failed the nation. We took a lot of flak for talking about high school graduates who were illiterate and university graduates who were illiterate. The Minister found it hard to believe that 7 or 5% of university graduates could be illiterate. Stats. Canada says that 11% of Canadian university graduates cannot handle everyday reading tasks: Stats. Canada, not Southam, Stats. Canada. It says that 30% of Canadian high school graduates cannot handle everyday reading tasks. Not Southam, Stats. Canada. These figures are higher than ours. That's what they call level four, but level four is everyday reading tasks.

For numeracy it is worse. Thirty-six percent of high school graduates and 17% percent of university graduates cannot handle everyday mathematical tasks, which may be why, Mr. Minister, student loans don't get paid on time. It's obviously worse among dropouts, as you would suspect. Fifty-two percent of the people who don't complete high school have insufficient reading skills and 53% have insufficient numeracy skills.

The third reason why I think the Statistics Canada study proved embarrassing is that it showed that the federal immigration policy of the 1980s was ill-conceived. I don't want to pick on the Vietnamese boat people, but I want to show that it's one thing to open your doors without at the same time opening your pocketbooks. If you open your doors, but don't increase your funding for ESL and French as a Second Language, then you end up with what the Stats. Canada survey found—a high rate of illiteracy among immigrants who came in the 1980s.

For the immigrants who came to Canada during the liberalized period of the 1980s we waived the language proficiency requirements for large portions, all done for the best of humanitarian reasons. Forty percent of those people in 1989 still tested as effectively illiterate,

not just limited in literacy, effectively illiterate, compared to 20% of the people who came during the '70s. Stats. Canada thinks it doesn't know the explanation for this discrepancy because it hasn't done a further analysis. But the people who came into Canada during the '80s had less to start with than those who came during the '70s. Therefore, they needed more help, but in fact the federal government reduced the per-capita funding for ESL programs, reduced the per-capita funding for immigrant assistance language programs, didn't increase it during the 1980s. So that's why I say that the immigration policy was ill conceived. It's not that those people shouldn't have been allowed in, but that the other half of the equation wasn't present.

The Stats. Canada survey is also embarrassing because it dramatized a huge gap in potential supply and demand. The Minister referred to Alberta's figures—71% of Albertans had the highest level of literacy, of reading ability; that's perfectly true. That leaves 29% of Albertans who fell below full reading ability. If my calculations are correct, that's 478,000 people out of the population that was surveyed in Alberta, and the population surveyed in Alberta was not all adults. For instance, 2% of the people were excluded because they lacked the ability to even answer the questionnaire in English or in French. Everyone 70 years or older in Alberta was excluded, just like everyone 70 years or older in all of Canada was excluded from the survey, that's 1.6 million people nationwide.

I don't know what the figure is for Alberta, but it's certainly my mother and maybe a lot of your mothers, and do you think they should have been excluded because they were illiterate to start with? I don't think they should have been excluded, but Statistics Canada decided to do so for their own reasons. Even taking the minimum figure, there are 478,000 people in Alberta, adults aged 18 to 69 who are not capable of everyday reading tasks, according to Stats. Canada. In the lowest two levels of reading ability, which is getting pretty marginal, there are 181,000 people in Alberta, 11% of the population. And in the very lowest level, people who would identify themselves as nonreaders, there are 66,000 people.

Now, if I heard what the Minister said correctly just a bit earlier, you have about 4,000 places in Alberta for adults to take literacy classes. The demand is anywhere up to 478,000, the supply is 4,000, and these figures are better for Alberta than they are for most provinces. Alberta can be proud in percentage terms of its ability to supply places; other provinces are far worse off. So you can see how embarrassing the Stats. Canada survey is for anyone who draws these conclusions from it.

Lastly, I alluded to this earlier, the Statistics Canada survey is embarrassing because what it really suggested is

that at least as far as the Government of Canada is concerned, one of the solutions to the literacy problem is the grim reaper. If you exclude all people 70 years or older, 1.6 million, from your survey, and you know that in the oldest age group you include, the 55- to 69-year-olds, only one third have the highest level reading ability, only one third of the people 55 to 69 can handle everyday reading. Then you know that probably in that 1.6 million whom you aren't even counting you are hiding another million illiterates in Canada, or if you prefer to use the term a million people whose reading ability is not sufficient to handle everyday chores. And why are you hiding them? Because they're all going to die and they don't matter anyhow. What other conclusion can you possibly draw from the fact that they were excluded from the survey?

Now, I think these results are shocking. They show that literacy is far more of a problem than the Southam survey did, and yet there was almost no public reaction to these results when they came out in May and June. I told you what I thought part of the reason was why it didn't get that much attention, but that's an awareness problem. I said I was going to talk about awareness, accountability and action. There's an awareness problem for you. The media failed to publicize the results adequately; it failed to follow up on the story. And even when it was publicized well in a few outlets, I say modestly the Southam Newspapers, it quickly got pushed aside as any sort of top of the mind issue by—name your combination of the following—Meech Lake, Oka, the GST, the Senate, and the crisis in the Gulf. It just didn't stay around as an issue.

There was obviously an accountability problem with the great disappearing Statistics Canada shock horror story. The accountability problem was that there has to be, *prima facie* if nothing else, a failure of the education system here; and yet the response from the education system has been deafening in its silence to the Stats. Canada report. The response from the periphery of the education establishment is that the students are to blame, not the system. I'll come back to that. I intend to be the skunk of the garden party later and have a lot to say about the education system in Canada.

And lastly, there's an action problem. The Literacy Secretariat has been going for two years, that's \$50 million worth of disbursements. Can anyone show me \$50 million worth of results? Can anyone show me \$10 million worth of results? I'll take five—anyone got five million worth of results out there? I feel like a Dutch auctioneer. Now, the pledge of \$125 million over five years. I've done some rough back-of-the-envelope calculations here, so don't hold me to them. But in January when the 7% GST is applied to every magazine sold in this country, every newspaper sold in this country, every book sold in this country and every piece of

written material sold in this country, the \$125 million, that huge fund that's being donated to help people become literate, will be wiped out by the tax on literacy within about three months. Probably less. So much for the action from the federal government. The one hand barely dips into the pocket and the other one whips your wallet out while you're not looking when it comes to donations towards literacy.

Now, I know that provincial ministers have held conferences and have launched action plans; and they are devising programs, but there are more people in Canada today with a literacy problem than there were in 1987, and that's a fact. So, in terms of what's been done, the action, we are going backwards. Now, I don't want to leave the impression that nothing has happened. This year, as you know, everyone is having a literacy conference. I could stay permanently in orbit over Canada if I wished to do so, see the country and talk to literacy conferences. The museums are having literacy conferences, the prisons are having a literacy conference, the B.C. Forest Industries are having a literacy conference, it's the done thing this year.

In the midst of all that, I think there are two very interesting initiatives, and perhaps in the end the ones that have the greatest promise. One is by the Canadian Home and School Parent Teacher Federation, which—I must be honest here—I thought was moribund. I thought it had gone out of business, in effect, but far from it. It has launched a thing called Literacy in the Information Age with funding from the Federal Literacy Secretariat. So here's at least \$100,000 of that missing \$50 million. The goal of this program is to raise public awareness about prevention, not remedial action; prevention of literacy, of low literacy or illiteracy; to find and publicize role models in communities and to get active community involvement that cuts across all sectors. I haven't had a chance to see what's being done in the hundred communities across Canada where they've established literacy exchanges, but some of the things have been to gather used books. In Bathurst, for instance, used books are gathered from some families and redistributed to families where they can't afford books for their children to read. Also they are producing a pamphlet that is given to new mothers about ways in which you can involve your child with the literate culture. I haven't had a chance to investigate what's being done here in Alberta, but the coordinator in Alberta is a woman in Pincher Creek, and I am sure she could help people if they are interested.

The second interesting initiative, and one that may in the end bear the most fruit, is in the private sector by an organization known as ABC Canada. It officially came into existence on the National Literacy Day, September 8th, but in fact it's been in the works for some months. It incorporates the business task force and the

people who did the Woods-Gordon study that I referred to earlier. It has folded in Peter Zousky, although that's a hard thing to envisage, folding in Peter Zousky, but his golf tournaments are now under that general umbrella and the profits from them go into the ABC Foundation. ABC Canada is a partner with the Canadian Advertising Foundation, those people who have created the television spot called, "In the Dark." I don't know how many people have seen the camera pens along the street, a row of lit houses and in the upper windows there are parents reading with children, not to children, until you come to a house where the upper window is dark and the camera goes in and it says, "Don't leave your child in the dark." It's an awareness ad, a public service ad, and it's very slick; it's all part of ABC Canada.

It's objectives are four: public awareness both about prevention and remedial aspects of literacy, to become a central depository of information on literacy programs for the private sector. You operate a pulp mill in Thompson, Manitoba and you want to know what you can do for a work place literacy project. You phone ABC Canada and they tell you what might be suitable for you. What's locally, what's within Manitoba, and what's nationally. People will come and give you advice on how to be the private sector voice in any national literacy discussions, the focus group, if you will, the focal group for the private sector. Assistance is also provided on how to channel funding to umbrella groups, not directly to program providers, but to people who then deal with program providers. ABC Canada doesn't want to get involved in running or funding literacy programs directly, but they don't mind channelling funding to other umbrella groups that do so. And I don't know yet what umbrella groups, and I don't think they know.

The Board of Directors shows, I think, that this is a fairly serious organization; it includes top people from the Post Office, Southam, World Literacy of Canada, Frontier College, Peter Zousky himself, the Publishers' Council, Coles Books, and various other private sectors groups. The one that fascinates me is Christie Brown, Mr. Christie's Cookies, because they have been very active in that whole field as well in sponsoring substantial awards for the best children's stories.

Some of the people with ABC are meeting today as part of a group that I referred to earlier, called the Public Policy Forum. We'll have a two-day session at Mount St. Marie, Quebec, where they are attempting to hammer out (this is the culmination of all those regional sessions that were held over the last 15 or 16 months) a national coordinating body for literacy for the private sector, and to come up with the strategy and objectives for the literacy efforts of the private sector. I predict that ABC Canada will end up being the national coor-

minating body for the private sector, and that the objectives will be somewhat like the ones that ABC Canada has already developed. However, these two initiatives, the Home and School initiative and ABC Canada only show how far we have to go.

If you look back over what I've said, I've tried to leave you with the impression that the educational establishment so far is defensive, that the mass media are only marginally involved, and that the government has been reactive rather than leading. I want to deal with these three sectors in reverse order, and again coming back to my awareness, accountability and action checklist.

The question of the government always is, and the Minister raised this point, where can we lead without having to tax people to death? There have been examples that don't require major expenditures, and some of them are in fact, he said modestly, in my book. This booklet contains lists of things that governments could do. An obvious one is that they could provide workplace literacy programs for their own employees, and although it has happened in a couple of instances, by and large, municipal, provincial and federal governments have not done that. And yet I can take you right here in this city to people who work for the government of Alberta who are functionally illiterate without any trouble whatsoever.

The governments can also set personal examples. Recently I successfully "strongarmed" the publisher of the *Ottawa Citizen* into saying that he would agree to take a CPR course, the kiss of life, the breath of life course. I had somebody from a local institution write in and say, "We need more people to take these courses. Not enough people take them." I said, "Why don't you rewrite this thing you've written and challenge the *Citizen* to be a community leader in this, and particularly challenge our publisher to go and take one of these courses?" I'd only been in the job since March and I was already getting my boss in Dutch. They wrote the article and I sent it up to the publisher and said, "Well, are you going to do it or aren't you going to do it?" And the note came back, "Of course I'll do it." Well, my publisher is a busy man and ministers and deputy ministers and directors in government are busy people as well. But if my publisher can find time to take a CPR course, then senior officials in government and members of legislatures can find time to be literacy tutors to set an example.

Governments can also remove a lot of the structural barriers that exist, and you people who operate programs know about them far better than I do. But the one that always completely baffles me and which has still not been removed is the UIC barrier, which is now tied up in the Senate. If people want to take a literacy training

course, they are cut off UIC benefits—a stupid, stupid, stupid barrier. And it's now in the new UIC revisions, but they haven't passed yet and that's been since 1987.

Most importantly, in my view, I think governments can help by tackling what the Duke of Wellington once called the "Futile Drivelling of Mere Quill Driving." Now, he meant officialese, which I call gobbledygook. You'll know what I mean if I tell you that it's piles of polysyllables, layers of legalese, and jungles of jargon. The material that's written by governments doesn't have to be that way.

Margaret Thatcher wrote the foreword for the British government's *Manual to Civil Servants* about how they have to write plain English. You don't have to worry about what we do in this country, calling it plain language; they can just call it plain English. But Margaret Thatcher wrote the foreword. Australia has even made its income tax form understandable. I swear, I've read it. And in the United States, most states have a plain language law. The federal government does as well; supposedly it happens to be a requirement in Canada.

Since July of 1988, the Treasury Board has had a regulation on the books which says, "Pronouncements of the Government of Canada, things meant for public consumption, have to be written in plain language." But in fact when you have them checked, most of them are written at university level, even the campaign material. In the recent Ontario election campaign, when we had it checked, materials required high school or better. Now, I said I don't believe in grade levels, but I am giving you the slot where it falls in. Yet, every single example shows that clear writing saves money and reduces errors. What I can't understand is that every single example also shows that plain writing sells things.

In today's newspapers there was a marvellous series of advertising by General Motors for people movers of various sorts, and it was very clever. It was very, very well done. It was written probably at somewhere around the grade eight or nine level, if you go through it and look at the word syllables and the sentences. It was trying to sell people on buying a car. The government of Canada has been trying to sell people on buying various things, and provincial governments have too, whether it was Meech Lake or the GST. How come they aren't smart enough to realize that that's the way to sell people? I mean GM doesn't do it that way because of any concern about literacy; they do it that way because of concern about the bottom line. How come governments are so dense?

So my solution is simple: there has to be a crusade for plain language, you and I do our part. Every time we get something which is written in gobbledygook or jargon, write across it, "This is gobbledygook," and send it

back to the people who sent it to you without a return address and without a stamp. It works wonders. I have a little sticker made up. I haven't any extras with me, but I put it on there and send it back.

That was government; the second is media. Where can the media get involved? Obviously the media can get involved with plain language. You know, clean out your own house first, Calamai, before you cast aspersions at others. Studies in the United States have shown, and I believe that it would be the same in Canada, that the complexity of the lead sentence, the first sentence of news stories, has been gradually creeping up over the last 20 years. In other words, newspapers are getting more difficult to read in the U.S. and I expect that is also the case in Canada. It's not just the *New York Times*, although it is certainly one of the ones involved. So we can make what we write easier to read.

The most important thing we can do is change our attitude. We've been treating literacy as a mission, as a civic responsibility. It's the thing we have to be involved in. But, in fact, literacy is far more important than that—it's an untold story, and we are in the business of telling stories. It's a natural tragedy and we are in the business of covering tragedies. The big problem here is how the media views the question of news. I'll give you one quick example. From March of 1989 until this week, in the *Edmonton Journal* under the category "Journal Stories," that is, staff-written stories or stories where the source was the *Journal*, there were 54 items which mentioned the word "literacy" or "illiteracy," enough that that became the key word in the database that is used to sort these things out. Now if you expand those search terms, you keep "literacy" and "illiteracy" and you include "school" and "schools," and "student" and "students," and "university" and "college," and "education" and "teacher" and "teachers" and even "education minister" among your search terms you then get, instead of 54, 2,498 of which you might be interested to know 535 are from the term "education minister"—2,498. Now that sounds like a fairly impressive thing from March of 1989 until this week. At the same time, if you ask Infomart, the database for Southam Newspapers, how many times there appeared on the sports pages of the *Edmonton Journal*, stories which used the key words "Oilers," "Drillers," "Eskimos" or "Trappers," your four professional sports teams in the city, there were 3,040. Fifty-four literacy, 3,040 professional sports stories over the same period.

Now, I would argue—I am not from Edmonton—that if you have a half a million Albertans who can't handle everyday reading tasks, they are probably worthwhile regarding continuing news coverage, at least the same coverage as you give the professional sports. I would argue that if you can give endless day-to-day coverage

to Oka, endless day-to-day coverage to what happens in the Senate, then you can give everyday coverage to what happens with literacy, instead of just hauling out the once-a-year September feature on literacy.

I should say that my critique of the *Edmonton Journal* was done simply because it is a local newspaper that most of you would see and that means you probably would have seen that on the very day I had this database search done, the *Journal* ran an excellent piece on reading with your child, rather than to your child. This piece would not show up on the database search. The words "literacy" or "illiteracy" did not appear on that piece, but in fact they were central to the whole issue. But that's not where I am going as far as solutions are concerned.

I am not even going to deal with television in this discussion of the media, because as far as I am concerned the CBC has abdicated any national role with respect to literacy. I mean, when you have in the United States a private, profit-making network, ABC, doing 50 times as much as the CBC does in Canada on literacy, the CBC is just not in the picture. It's probably because they know as well as I do that television is part of the problem, not part of the solution when it comes to literacy.

But the print media, especially newspapers—I mean this is our bread and butter, if people can't read a newspaper, eventually they're not going to buy it, and if they start out having trouble reading they won't even start out buying the newspaper. So we have to do something about it. Now, luckily again, there are solutions, some that we can adopt, and some that we can import.

Some work is being done in the U.S. which could be replicated in Canada. An organization called the Ginn Foundation of the United States, which is funded by a newspaper group similar to the Southam group, held a conference in July at which they talked about how do you cover a literacy story. What's the primer for journalists on a major social issue? And they came up with a whole series of ways in which that can be done which really boiled down to how the media can have a continuing news coverage rather than a one-time crusade about literacy. They also gave what I thought was a very important instance, an ammunition of how not to cover literacy in the media, and I want to quote some of that.

How not to cover literacy: With trite anecdotal stories. Typically the literacy story is treated as a cute, heartwarming feature about someone who never learned to read, hid it all of his or her life, finally decided to come out of the closet and get tutoring help, and now lives happily ever after reading stories to grandchildren.

There's a particular reason why this approach is wrong and wrongheaded and this gets me to the third topic I

wanted to deal with. It's wrongheaded because it gets the educational system off the hook, the type of anecdotal, trivializing coverage of literacy. It seems obvious to me, maybe it's not to anybody else, but any system where 30% of high school graduates can't handle everyday reading tasks isn't doing its job. In addition, if you have another 30% who drop out and have even higher rates of low literacy, that's not too hard to get your mind around—who have high rates of not being able to read, that the system has failed. It's not, however, obvious to the Canadian public.

Here I'm actually going to give you some real news because the results of this survey are only being released today. Decima Research was commissioned by ABC Canada to do a poll on Canadian public awareness and attitudes on the subject of literacy, and it's being released today at this conference in Mount St. Marie. There were 1,300 telephone interviews, which is a decent sample size for what we want out of this, and they found the following: Canadians are very concerned about literacy.

They may in fact be more concerned than they were a few years ago, although the polls weren't done by the same organization so it's not possible to make an exact comparison. The concern is greater than concern over AIDS, for example, and it's about par on the concern with the protection of the environment or with alcohol and drug abuse. However, that concern only comes out when people are prompted. So if we ask people, "What are you concerned about?" they don't list reading and writing. If you say to them, "Don't you think everyone should be able to read and write?" they say, "Yes, well that's terribly important. It's as important as protecting the environment." But they give you the protecting the environment without any prompting and you have to prompt them for the literacy, so it's not what people in policy call a top-of-the-mind issue.

The reason it's not, says Decima, is because it's not seen as personally threatening or personally affecting people who don't have the problem. The state of the environment, alcohol and drug abuse can affect you even though you are not an alcohol or drug abuser or even though you personally aren't harming the environment. But how can someone else's illiteracy or low literacy affect you? That's the public reaction—if it doesn't affect me, I am not affected.

What's the cause? Canadians are aware. What's their attitude towards the cause? What do they think causes literacy problems? Overwhelmingly, I can't give you exact figures, but overwhelmingly they say it is the fault of the individuals themselves or of their families. Overwhelmingly. The people watch too much television, or they weren't looked after properly by their parents or they weren't read to or they didn't take full

advantage of the educational system. The educational system, according to the Decima poll, did not fail the people who have literacy problems; they failed the system. Now, as a result, the public views the proper remedial solution to illiteracy is to send people back to school, back to the formal school system.

People polled didn't see voluntary organizations as important players. The only voluntary organization that got mentioned in an unprompted list was the YM/YWCA and it was mentioned by 2% of the respondents. Neither did they see employers or unions as players in the literacy question. It didn't see the problem as one of more funding. It didn't see any need to change the education system for prevention of future literacy problems. I think those are all negatives, and I'll tell you why in a minute.

On a positive note, according to the Decima research, the public views literacy as a personal issue, that is for a push for self actualization. What's important is that a person be able to participate in society, that they have self-esteem, and not as a question of international competitiveness. I think that's reassuring. The public also doesn't see literacy as an immigration problem; they see it as a homegrown problem, not one that was brought to us by people coming from offshore.

Overall, though, I think these results are profoundly depressing. I would want to read the full 65-page report before I firm up on ideas, but my initial reaction is that it is profoundly depressing because how do you get to accountability and action if you don't have awareness? And what this shows is the public awareness is very thin and very ill informed. If literacy is always personalized, if it's always the heartwarming feature story and seldom seen as systemic, then no wonder public awareness is so distorted, my argument is distorted. In other words, the blame is here, the blame is in ourselves. If we always personalize it, it's no wonder that people don't see it as a systemic problem.

Now I think following on that, and this is the grand wind-up pitch, that both the education system and all of us taxpayers have to be held accountable for this. The education system has failed, is failing still and will continue to fail as long as parents and taxpayers don't hold it accountable. Statistics Canada says schools are graduating people who can't handle everyday reading, and where is the response? Why haven't all the taxpayers been demanding that school systems respond to this? Most school systems carry out comprehensive reading assessments. Where are the results? Why are they suppressed? Why aren't they made public? They are in other countries; why aren't they made public here?

In the United States the federal government has published a guide to effective education called, "What

Works," so that parents and trustees and lawmakers and even ministers can look at their local school systems and decide how they rate, using this impartial guide. Why hasn't similar impartial information been made available in Canada? And why haven't people demanded it? And please don't tell me that it's because of federal, provincial, jurisdictional problems; those are far worse in the U.S. than they are in Canada when it comes to education.

And where are the academics? The biggest single problem with the Canadian school system is dropouts, and if you look at the research done by faculties of education, the question of dropouts gets meager, meager attention. It is not a focus by any matter or means. Now, not only doesn't the education system not cooperate in terms of accountability, it actually blocks being made accountable.

The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, the Federal/Provincial coordinating body, asked various polling firms in this country to bid this summer on a national survey of 13- and 16-year-olds across the country on their proficiency in reading. This covers primary and secondary schools, using the same approach that was used by the Statistics Canada survey. The Council found a bid that it thought was worthwhile, and then it had to withdraw the program because of an objection from one province which did not want outsiders to come into its classrooms and look at its students and

how well they were doing. What is that province trying to hide? Why doesn't that province want a national assessment? Why doesn't that province want to be compared to other provinces?

Now, I know there are a lot of problems in the homes in our entire culture. We have an a-literate society. You probably didn't see it, but the Gallup Poll reported a week ago that 17% of Canadian adults say they don't open a book in the average week, 29% say they spend fewer than four hours per week reading a book, 1% of Canadian adults say they watch no television in an average week, including videotapes, and only 11% say they watch fewer than four hours of television a week. That stacks up; if you add these figures up it is 46% against 11% when you look at nonreaders versus nonviewers—46% of Canadians are effectively nonbook readers and only 11% are effectively nonviewers of television, so guess whose kids get the idea that reading isn't very important.

Then on top of that, the a-literate culture, people who can read but don't, you have the single working parents, the functionally illiterate parents and the literate parents who are too busy to read and all the other problems that you know better than I do. My question is simply this, and this is where I end: "Which is going to be easier to change: our culture or our schools?"

Keynote—Frank Ogden

Good Morning your Excellency, the entourage, and the executives at the head table, including my conference chaperon, Stuffy, down there, and good morning the rest of you. Welcome to the future, it's going to be a time of chaos, uncertainty and golden opportunity.

The literacies you have been familiar with so far are reading and writing. You're going to have to become literate also in visual literacy and in computer literacy.

At the turn of the century, most of your great grandparents couldn't read or write. If you could draw an "X" in those days you were considered literate. If you could sign your name 100 years ago, that was literacy. Later on, in the '30s, if you could get a sixth grade education that was considered literacy. Today, you have to have at least high school graduation for holding of the literacy known as reading and writing, and in the communications age, it's going to lurch.

I think for the next 10 or 20 years reading and writing are in a transitional period. We are moving into an age that's going to have so many wonders that at the end of 20 years most of the viewing will be seeing and feeling. You are going to see a slide presentation, and I will show you some of the things that are coming up. Though we have a short time this morning, only 3,600 seconds, if there are any further questions I will be available after the morning session.

This is a Chinese character for chaos; it means both opportunity and danger. The pessimacies, the danger, the optimacies, opportunity. I say there are more golden opportunities today and in the future than there ever have been in human history. I am quite optimistic about the future. I know a lot of people see doom and gloom and things disintegrating around them, but this is common when any age ends. It happened at the end of the agricultural age. Now we are coming to the end of the industrial age, and a lot of the problems remain unsolved either with industrial age social inventions or technological inventions. But from what I've seen already, many of the unsolved problems of the industrial age that have been left over will be solved using the technologies of the new age.

Today a student who has access to a computer or a phone line and a modem has access to more information in one night than both his or her parents had in their whole lifetime, and if he or she is fortunate enough to have access to a satellite dish, he or she can have access in one evening to more information than all their forebears had in history. Think of the implications of this because they are vast.

It's not just North America that's being wired; it's the whole world. And very quickly we are all going to be hooked up to the electronic highway, the ISDN, the Integrated Services Digital Network, that will bring everybody hundreds of channels, unlimited bands with not only visual but print access to the world's knowledge. Right now in Vienna, Virginia there's an organization being set up called the International Information and Educational Facility, and it's working on the philosophy that in this modern age if one can flip a switch for instant electricity, turn a tap for instant water, why not hit a button for instant knowledge? And they will be sending all the knowledge of the world via satellite and via ISDN fiber optics to anywhere; it can be a home or a school.

The knowledge of the world delivered instantaneously at costs that are so low it's going to make obsolete many of the other institutions and the way we have absorbed information and education in the past. It's my opinion that the traditional schools, if they were factories, would have been closed 10 years ago because they are not producing a salable product. They haven't allowed everybody to achieve a sufficient standard of literacy that is required for the industrial age, never mind what's going to be required for the communication age.

The communication age is operating 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week because we are going global. Stock markets and stockbrokers now have somebody in the office 24 hours a day because they deal in securities, bonds and currencies. So we are going to see a lot more activity around the clock. In the past, during the agricultural and most of the industrial age, the knowledge of the population generally kept up to the level of technology. They ran in parallel. But over the last 10 years or so technology has been leaping far ahead of the average knowledge of the general population, something we have to change.

Japan now has a 99% literacy rate. They are far better schooled in technology than we are in North America or Europe, and their cost for education is one half the cost that we spend in Canada per capita. For instance, they don't have any janitors in their schools, the students clean up the school under the teachers' supervision. Also, they use their schools at nights and on weekends. Our schools are controlled by the janitors' union, and unless you pay the janitor on their scale to open the door, you are not allowed to use the school, and that's a school paid for by tax dollars.

B.C.'s statistics show that of the kids in fifth grade, about 38% drop out before they get to high school. Another 78% of the remaining balance drop out before they get to university, and another 75% drop out before they get a simple bachelor of science degree, and of those that do obtain the simple degree, 95% drop out before they get a PhD. So, of 5,000 students entering a school, only 1% of them, 500, get a complete education, and yet the taxpayers have been paying for a full education for their children.

I suggest that we have to take advantage of the new technologies to spread more widely all the advantages of being literate, both in a written sense and in the new age of a visual sense. We are entering the age of mind link. I think before this decade is out you will be inputting computers using your thought waves.

As we become global, the competition is going to become horrendous. I can now get my Canadian income tax done in Madras, India for 20 cents on the dollar of what it costs me to have it done in Canada. I can now hire a man in Moscow, a PhD in computer science, for \$150 U.S. a month. Think of the implications of that. We can import labor now. It doesn't have to be here physically because everything done on a computer, of course, can be zapped to me at the speed of light in seconds at relatively very low cost. And in Madras, they will print out on your home computer. If you insert a Canadian Government Income Tax form, they will print it out on your computer right here in Edmonton from Madras.

You know when we first found the Rosetta stone that taught us about history and gave us the first inkling of translation, we didn't know that underneath it really was a computer. This is the digital age and you have to understand the digital literacy just as much as you did the ABCs of the past. Knowledge is being transferred in far different ways, and it is being transferred much faster.

Two years ago, microfiche. Obsolete. Eighteen months ago, the laser card; it holds the information equivalent of 200 pages of typewritten information the size of a credit card. Obsolete. Three months later, the super laser card; it holds 800 pages of information, everything from womb to tomb, including X-rays and charts, etc. Obsolete. The life card, now put out by Blue Cross and Blue Shield, holding over one million bits of information. Obsolete. Now, the Opticard, holds 22,000 pages of information. I was going to put all my books on this until I found out I have to write for another 17 years if I want to fill it. Obsolete. The new Grolier Encyclopedia, 21 volumes and it doesn't fill one side of this 4.5 inch disk. Obsolete. The timetable of history. Fifteen billion years of history, again on the same disk. Obsolete.

This field is moving so rapidly. In the United States they have had a lot of trouble with their Savings and Loans Association, billions and billions in bankruptcies, and it is estimated they have \$500 billion-worth of real estate on their hands, volumes of books that would stack to the ceiling. It's all on the Opticard. It takes three months to read it, but if you want to know about any one specific piece of property, a three-bedroom house in Kerrville Texas, you can access it immediately.

Panasonic's new floppy videodisk holds 50 colored slides the equivalent of a 35 mm film slide. Not only that, I can instantly change number 13 or 35, and if there's a new shot in my office when I'm on the road, my staff can send it to me over the phone. Think of the implications of that.

Let me quickly tell you about my staff. My Vice-President in Research and Development, Jim Semenick, I hired when he was 13 because I couldn't find a competent adult. Three years ago I hired another kid, Jeff Bailey. When he was 12, he built his own computer. He felt IBM made an inefficient machine. And eight months ago I hired another kid, and he's been doing computer-generated graphics on my Macintosh II utilizing 16 points eight million different colours. He's been with us eight months. He's now three years old. I get them, hopefully, before they get brain damaged attending the antique institutions of education that are provided across the country.

I'll show you how quickly some other things are moving. How many of you have a walkie-talkie? You paid \$2,000 if it is a cellular walkie-talkie, and if you are using cellular you are paying 50 cents per minute operating costs. Let me ruin your day. The forum phone in Britain costs \$200 and a flat \$15 a month operating charges, not 50 cents a minute. It weighs four ounces, fits into your shirt pocket and, for ladies, it comes in assorted pastels to match their business outfit or their cane. You are used to, especially here in Canada, seeing the large satellite dishes. Well, you no longer need that. There is a new satellite dish just out in Japan. It's the size of a cafeteria fiberglass serving tray, weighs eight pounds, has half of the black box in the back and it sells for \$300. And it brings in HDTV, that's high definition television, three times the information and twice the resolution that we get over here. Once you see that kind of television, you'll never go back to seeing what you've been watching these last few years. And if you have a house with a window facing south because all the communication satellites are over the equator at an altitude of 22,300 miles, you can set it on your kitchen table. It'll look through the window at the satellites and pick them all up. It doesn't have to rotate like the old ones did; it has electronic steering. Now, if you live in a house that doesn't have a window facing south, sell.

Some of the other things are happening in translation. For a relatively low cost, \$100, this credit-card-sized translator will translate any language. You have to get a different one for each language, and there's a book with 500 phrases that you might want to use, like "Where's the bathroom?" etc. All you have to do is hit the "on" button and play. Instantly you can replay phrases again and again, and you learn how to speak that language. I suggest that it can be adapted for the literacy field as well. I mentioned all the things that were obsolete. Cambridge University in England succeeded in putting the entire 29 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica on the head of a pin and still leave space for the angels to dance. Of course that's obsolete. The very, very latest is SERODS, which stands for Surface Enhanced Raven Optical Data Storage. A five-and-a-quarter inch disk holds one million, three hundred-page books. Now why would you build a library, buy books, hire librarians, when it's all on this one disk? And instantly accessible by dozens of people simultaneously.

It's a whole new world out there, and those who continue to put their capital into old-fashioned tools are like someone buying a covered wagon when Honda just came out with their new machine. We've come a long way from the vacuum tube, the transistor, the integrated circuit, and the very large integrated circuit. We are now in the age of the fifth-generation artificial intelligence computer that is both hardware and software. The Japanese are in their eighth year on this program and what they are doing is developing the wisdom machine. They are putting the brains of a thousand doctors into it, a thousand geneticists, a thousand engineers, a thousand everything and then they will retrieve the answer as a consensus from all these intellectual inputs. They call that Expert Systems. It will say there's a probability factor of 99.9 to the 17th decimal point that that patient has Dami fever if it is a medical question. You are going to see a vast use of Expert systems conquering many of the problems that are now besetting the world.

Totally new mathematical formulae are being created. Many of you are familiar with calculus, which is a series of formulae that deal with physical phenomena. Fractos, the new mathematics deals with insides and outsides: how a bacterium survives in a culture, a child in a family, a city in a state, a country on a continent, a continent on a planet, and a planet in the universe. It can tell this. By observing one foot of a coastline, it can redraw what the rest of the coastline pretty well looks like because this information is all contained in the way Fractos develop. It is a totally new way to understand the constant change between a wolf population and a deer population. It's the way you see the world. If you see it in a pessimistic vein; if everything looks bleak

and disastrous, it's because you haven't crossed the river and I call it the Nocibur, that's the Rubicon spelled backwards. If you are on one side, you feel depressed, left out, you feel that everything is doom and gloom and collapsing around you. But once you understand what the new technologies can do, although I admit they are not going to solve everything, you feel exhilarated, you feel confident, because you see a bright new future instead of one that has a dismal ending.

The future is capital intensive, not labor intensive. At the turn of the century, as I mentioned, when most people were illiterate in the written sense, you could become a farmer if you had \$20. If you bought a scythe, your strong back and your strong arms allowed you to produce the product. That may have required 5% capital and 95% labor. Then in the industrial age when the assembly lines were created, it jumped up to about 50% capital and 50% labor, because we needed the money to buy assembly lines, micrometers, blueprint machines and all the paraphernalia of the industrial age. Now, we are entering the information age. It looks like it is taking 75 to 80% capital and 20 to 25% labor, because a lot of the new equipment is more expensive. When we hit the age of mind link, which won't be very far away, I suggest that it's going to be 95% capital and 5% physical labor.

But then there will be a new component introduced—intellectual labor led by knowledge navigators, just like in the 12th century when Portugal was fortunate enough to get a really smart politician, who converted the astrolabe used for astronomical calculations to a maritime instrument that could create what later became latitudes. This one instrument allowed Portugal, in a brief short number of years, to become the world's leading economic power.

This politician took his captains Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan, who were scared because everybody knew the world was flat, and he said, "Look fellas, you know where you are today, Lisbon. You hold this at six foot height and you sight the sun, like that light, through these holes in here and read off this number here and you are in Lisbon today; put it down on the chart." And the chart showed the coastal areas, but all that was unexplored territory. And he sailed out with them for a day, put a dot and another dot and another dot; now they were out of sight of land. Nobody had ever been out of sight of land before because they knew it was so dangerous. And he said, "Now, just follow the dots back," and they did. And that allowed them to open up what is Angola and Mozambique, the enclaves of Goa and India, and the enclave of Macao and China. And so he became a world leader.

An analogy to that was what happened in North America when the first settlers came and blazed a trail to the forest by taking the bark off every 30th or 40th tree so they could sight their way back. Well, he sighted his way back, too, via the sun and later the stars. We have to utilize the new technology as exemplified in a computer to navigate through these new lands of information that are being formed out there.

Knowledge is now doubling at the rate of 100% every 18 months. And from all the statistics and trends I see, we are going to have about a 16 to 18% of times increase in this decade. That means, first of all, everything that you know now is obsolete by Christmas next year, and this new knowledge is going to come eventually at a rate 16 times faster than what you are getting right now. You have to have new technologies to absorb that.

My staff watch a lot of television. We monitor Russia and India out of Sri Lanka, we do Asia and Japan out of Tokyo, we do everything between Bermuda and Hawaii and the equator and the pole out of Vancouver. We do Africa, Europe and the Middle East out of the Bahamas and Wales, so we see a lot of television, but we don't watch it in real time. We record it and then watch it in fast-forward, and we can watch 24 hours in an hour and a quarter, and we don't see individual stories. What we see is waves and trends, and it gives us a whole new way of looking at the unfolding future.

Within this decade, some people will be marrying robots, probably women first, if they are not married to one already. And think of the advantages; women can then design them to their fantasy, and program them to their stamina.

Women are far better equipped for the information age than men. Men led the agricultural age because of their physical strength, generally. They succeeded again, in the industrial age, because that was a mechanical age, mechanical and hydraulic, and that extended man's muscles as in bulldozers and steam shovels etc., but the computer in the communications age extends your mind and your imagination, and women are better equipped for that. First of all, women make decisions differently. Men make their decisions based on their education and their experience, and this was fine in the agricultural and industrial age when you had the luxury of taking three months to gather information and then make a decision. But today you've got to make a decision instantaneously or you're going to get a fax in another half hour asking for that answer.

Also men are generally now staying in sunset industries that have nowhere to go but down. Women, on the other hand, make their decisions based on their perception of the environment, the latest change in their intuition, and many men can't even spell it even if

they think they are literate. Women in the United States now control 4.1 million corporations. These corporations have growth rates twice that of companies owned by men. Incidentally, women are now embezzling more than ever before; it's an opportunity they never had a chance to get at earlier. Women are getting into sunrise industries, new industries that have nowhere to go but up. They do their homework better, they are not interested in the fast buck, they are willing to spend more time and effort and wait for a longer payback.

Also, it is becoming a more feeling and humanistic world, and wherever I've been, wherever I see advanced, high technology, I see advanced touch, more humanity, not less. Now, you may say, "Well, how can he mix the two?" Well I found it relatively easy because if you want to have dolphins in a show somewhere that can explain what it's like at the bottom of the sea, what better than robotic dolphins that can talk in your language, explain what it's like under the sea, as an educational device. Think of the implications of that in many fields.

Robot nurses, and you know what they say? They're more humane. They don't come in late on Monday, leave early on Friday, upset on Wednesday because they had a fight with their boyfriend and forget your name. Come back in a year, these robotic nurses will remember your name, and if your life signs show any change, they signal the doctor by a satellite pager quicker than a nurse can walk from the room to a nurses' station. Robotic teachers. Again, they are more humane.

Human sheepshearers—they are in a hurry, they get paid by the sheep or by the pound, and they nick the sheep. A robot is more sensitive, it never nicks the sheep and it takes the wool off in one piece which makes it much easier for grading and carding, and so it increases the value.

This is another Canadian development from Guelph University, a robotic sow. Right away it saves 25% of the litter because normal litters lose 25% because most of them get squashed when the sow rolls over. It doesn't occur here, and the diets change daily until they are 22 days old when they are weaned. The robotic sow gives the same kind of grunt as the regular pig when it is feeding the young; it's on a chip embedded in the sow. Robot artists can be far better than artists you've seen. You will see some of these early robotic pictures going on sale at fantastic prices. Van Gogh look out!

A shopping machine that is the size of a Coca Cola machine. It replaces the Hudson's Bay and the Eaton's store and they sell from 25% to a third less. They are starting to ship them now in the United States, they go into hotel lobbies, convenience stores, open 24 hours a

day, and if you have a computer at home, you can access their main computer and shop from there. No use worrying about a parking place, going out in the rain, or if you get an urge at 3:00 in the morning, you can go shopping till you get sleepy. Just stick in your Visa card and hit the green button three times.

Robotic orange pickers that can detect the difference in 16.8 million degrees of ripeness, and they go up to it; OK it's ripe, they pick it. They go to the next one, and it tells them come back Tuesday at 2:10.

This is the Salad Vac. They are using it in the San Fernando Valley. It vacuums up the insects; they get caught in the whirling blades, get bashed up, and are spewed out as mulch. No pesticides. They are using it on strawberries, lettuce and raspberries right now. This is one of the robotic tankers that they are starting to plow the route from Yokohama to Vancouver. The average fuel cost on a ship of this tonnage is roughly \$10,000 a day. Robotic sails cut the cost in half because they adjust for every little change in the wind and the prevailing wind is from Yokohama to Vancouver, but they still save 25% going back because they can handle the sails and the wind power much more efficiently.

This is the Phanic plant on the slopes of Mount Fujiyama in Japan where robots build robots, and if one up front breaks down, two healthy robots come from the back. They both take this one off station; one of them gets in and takes over and the well one takes the sick one to sick bay and fixes him up. They built the factory and equipped it with the money they made from selling the land next door that used to be an employees' parking lot. Think of that. Free factories.

And the very latest by Chagoma. They build the first floor of an office, hotel or an apartment house. The first floor is a robot and it builds the rest of the building itself. Twenty-four hours a day, it doesn't stop because of the weather, no labor problems, it just keeps building. Just think of the savings and not having all that capital tied up for a month.

If you are going to have any brain surgery, have it done by a robot. By the time any human is a brain surgeon, he or she is 40, 50 or 60, and if they don't have a perceptible tremor, they will have an imperceptible one.

It's very hard for an athlete 20 years, 23 years old to hold five-thousandth of an inch tolerance; the robots can hold ten-thousandth of an inch and never slip. It's the way we look at the new technology. In Europe and North America you say "robots" and someone thinks of something cold and sterile; you get an image of this machine that's taking away your job; not so in the Orient. They see it as a friend, a co-worker, somebody that does the dangerous work, that works in toxic en-

vironments, that makes your job easier. They came up with an official logo of the Japanese Industrial Robot Society showing the stainless steel gloved hands of a robot releasing man from his lowly job as a worker caterpillar to become a far more creative butterfly. It's a different philosophy, and it's also spawning a type of robot religion. And I ask them, "Well, in the West we consider this a little far out." And they say, "Why, our robots meet all the criteria for Christianity. They can walk on water, they can walk under water, they can operate in outer space, they can walk through fire. You've got one in Toronto you can fire bullets at. It can sense if anybody's in the building; it can talk to them and talk back or pass information back and forth. What do you mean they don't meet your criteria?"

The head office for the Bank of Asia is built in his image, a robot. And, I suggest, it's more humane than our bank buildings. Does your bank have a day care center on the ground floor for both depositors and for staff? Where is the cafeteria in your bank? I suggest, it's most likely in a basement, windowless office. Theirs is on the 18th floor of this building where you can actually open the windows and walk around on the balcony. Wherever there's high tech, there's advanced high touch.

A Sri Lankan Buddhist monk meditates through his computer. You remember in the earlier days of Christianity we had speaking in tongues and automatic writing? Well, what the Buddhist monk does, he types in "What's the meaning of life?" or whatever his question is, goes into a trance, and his hands, through the computer, type out the answer for him.

It's the way you see the world, the way the young kids and those that are illiterate see it, and what is necessary before we can show them the advantages of learning. Let them see how they can get into the life stream of life, the river of life, and not be as disadvantaged because there are so many ways now that technology can teach them a phrase. This little translator I was showing you can help them learn words and how to spell; they can hear it again and again. They can do it at home or when they are alone, and they are not embarrassed by somebody watching them and maybe laughing at their errors. And the same with the computers. I don't allow my books in the Gutenberg format, only on computer disks. I call it expanded knowledge. Every one of these is a book and if you are illiterate, it will read it to you in male, female or robotic voice while the words are on the screen. So, once you hear it spoken, which is easy for most to understand, then you can see what it looks like and then you can learn each word. And, again, play it over and over and over until you get it.

This technology is dramatically coming down in price. For instance, the Macintosh Plus, has just been reduced

to \$999 now and most educational institutions were given a third off. They may drop it now to 25%. But that puts a computer into homes where they can study on their own.

Biotechnology, it's going to be the most controversial subject in this decade. It's going to be so controversial, abortion will be put on the back burner and you won't hear of it again. In Guelph, Ontario, they injected eggs with the genes from quail. Biotechnology is doing unbelievable things. You know, for years they said nobody had run the four minute mile; nobody could jump out of an airplane with a parachute because you'd die from not being able to breathe before you could open it; and nobody would ever break the sound barrier; and certainly nobody would ever transfer characteristics between species. Well, that barrier has now been broken. They've taken the gene that causes the glow in a firefly and transferred it across the insect-animal-human barrier into the plant world. They've put it into this tobacco plant that glows before it is lit. Think of the implications of that because, theoretically at least, this now means that we can move anything to anything. A report I just got across my desk through my screen two days ago says the Italians have succeeded in transferring a DNA mixture, sprayed on human sperm. The sperm absorb the DNA and they have replicated this, duplicated the process, and that means anything can be transferred from anything.

You will see biohackers, young kids, who for \$20 build a geneblaster and create new life forms in their basements. Some of them will be so brilliant very quickly that you will see companies in the Orient offering a 15-year-old kid \$100,000 a year U.S. to go over there to work. Over here, when these smart hackers do something that the institutions and our society generally don't like, they put them into jail. In the Orient, they put them to work.

Vertical farming is going to have a big impact on the prairies, I suggest, because you can grow more on five acres than you can on 200 acres of normal prairie farmland. You are growing 24 hours a day and you are growing 365 days a year. Far less water is used, much more control of fertilizing.

We have been upgrading cattle for more milk and more beef. In Mexico, the peon can't afford a big cow and even if he could his plot of land is too small to feed it, so they downgraded five generations until they produced the *minivaca*. The peasant can afford that and his plot of ground is big enough to feed the one cow. But what are they finding out? That 10 *minivacas* only eat as much grass as one full-sized cow, but they produce three times as much milk and two and a half times as much beef. Maybe we've been going the wrong way. And not only that, he can do a fetal implant into a

regular scrub cow. Because these are so small at birth, the calves are only the size of a rabbit. He can implant 10 of them, and when the cow drops the calves, he is rich beyond wildest dreams because now he is a rancher, he's got a herd. It's a whole new jump in economics for many of the people around the world.

This is a picture of a potato patch in Oregon, taken from the Landsat satellite. We know more about this guy's farm, taken from outer space, than the guy that has owned the farm for 40 years and walked through it every day, because he is only seeing that narrow portion, the visible electromagnetic spectrum. He's missing the infrared, the ultraviolet and the gamma rays that tell us so much more.

Today, information is power. Back in the '30s, during the depression days, the story goes about a farmer trying to sell his farm for \$5 an acre, and he tried for two years and nobody would buy it and his neighbors had the same problem. One day a city slicker came out and said, "I'll give you \$10 an acre for your farm." And the guy fell all over himself to take the money, and he's in the pub talking to his friends and he says, "I took that city slicker. He paid me \$10 an acre for my 200 acres; look. I'm buying for the rest of the night." The farmer was selling the farm, the city slicker was buying an oil well. He had more information.

If he was going to keep it as a potato farm in this case, he wouldn't be using tubers. That's the potato where you slice it up and get the eye that starts a new plant because that takes a lot of labor. It takes a ton of tubers to plant an acre and think of the storage until the right time for planting, think of the labor and transportation. This is TPS, true potato seed, five ounces plants an acre. No labor, no storage and it can be planted in the ground with a rotary air gun and it has a built-in vitamin pack that comes up before the weeds. It has built in repellents for the fungus and bacteria; rodents or birds won't eat it. It's got nothing but advantages.

Aeroponics, not hydroponics, aeroponics where the plants are on a conveyor belt, and every 55 minutes they go through this spray zone and get sprayed with water and nutrients. Hemowari, it's Japanese for sunflower.

Zero voltage, the equivalent of electricity. It takes light from the sun and that thing that looks like a satellite dish with an acrylic bowl tracks the sun, gathering and intensifying the sunlight and feeding it into the building on fiber optics. On the way down, they do a thing called the light shift. They take out the harmful ultraviolet that burns tomatoes and people and get rid of that. They take out the infrared heat and they heat the building, and then pure sunlight comes down very close to the leaf and it greatly accentuates the photosyn-

thesis process and the plant goes va-va-voom. Much better way.

They are using it to grow tomatoes, tomatoes not even genetically altered. Ordinary tomato plant—how much can seed cost? The best one in the world? A nickel. And here's what they've done in Japan. Inside in the shade, they've grown a plant 30 feet high, 60 feet across, that in six months produces 15,000 tomatoes at a wholesale value of 50 cents a piece; that's \$7,500 return on a nickel. You wonder why the Japanese have all the money? They understand mark-up.

Lettuce while you wait. Three-storey buildings with 17-foot window boxes rotating on the new vertical conveyor belts. New, because the land in Japan is quite expensive. It's getting very expensive, the last acre in the Ginza strip went for a reported \$1.7 billion U.S. They haven't sold any for about three years because nobody wants to sell and they claim they've heard of offers up to \$7.8 billion an acre. Nobody wants to sell. Why? They don't want to give it away, so they are building islands over the water, huge islands anchored to the seabed that rotate as the wind and the waves change. And along the leading edge, they have not only wind generators, but wave generators that take that energy and force from the sea and generate electricity for this relatively large island that will have a 1,000-room hotel for guests and visitors, a 200-room hotel for the sailing fleet, and it has 19 fish farms behind it. And they don't have to feed their fish; they are out in the ocean and the natural water feeds them. They don't worry about an algae bloom because with the wind, the fish can escape. They can't in our agriculture.

Underwater hotels in Key Largo, Florida. I was there last year. You check in on the dock. They take your suitcase, put it into a zip lock plastic bag, tie a white rope to it and throw it in the ocean. Then you dive down. Room service comes the same way. With land so expensive in Japan, they are now starting to build underground. They don't have to take that two-hour trip out to the suburbs and back. In Vancouver we are over an hour now out to some of our suburbs. They go down for five minutes into their condo, and five minutes up and they are in the office buildings above ground. When their buildings are underground they don't have to heat them because the heat from the bodies and the activity provides sufficient heat. Then what happens once it is heated, you don't have to heat it any more, that heat will rise, be filtered and sold as heat to the buildings above the ground. Also, a wide-open atrium so they don't get a feeling of claustrophobia.

We've learned more about the human brain in the last 10 years than we have in all human history. We are finally learning about ourselves, and how we think and

how we operate, and I've been participating in some of these experiments. I've had this hippy headband for about five years and using my biofeedback, my alpha and beta waves, I've been able to turn my computer on, tell it to run a program or tell the printer to print, untouched by human hands. But, that's obsolete. I don't know how many of you saw Natalie Wood's last movie, "Brainstorm," but it's closer than you think.

This is when I went into the PET scan. That's a Positron Emission Tomographic scanner where they inject you with radioactive isotopes. The geiger kind of goes clickety, clickety, click and then they put you into a horizontal hair dryer for three hours and bombard you with protons. What happens, your brain, the radioactivity in there lights up, depending on what you think. They wanted me to think of the future, but I thought sex instead and screwed up the experiment and we had to start all over. This machine tells us where we think because a different part of our brain lights up when we think work, rather than play.

This is the readings from the new quantified signal imager in Toronto. They had me hooked up to this for six and a half hours, and we videotaped the whole thing and this tells what you think. In the future, anybody hiring you or giving you a position will not ask for the portfolio of your education and your experience, because we all know that can be fudged. But you can't fudge your brain atlas and you are going to have to have a PET scan, an MRI scan and a QSI scan, because that tells everything. It tells what you are capable of. For instance, these look like coral laptavs in the Pacific, but that was me with my eyes closed, hooked up to this toy, visualizing driving over the Lions Gate Bridge in Vancouver. So if you want to know what the bridge looks like, that's it. You have to change your way of looking.

This is the first DNA hologram in the country. This was done in New York. They took my blood here, put it through a genome sequencer in New York and this is really neat. If when I die and go into a mummy or whatever, 2,000 years from now, if they find it, they can take a hair, a piece of fingernail, one cell out of your body and if they have this, with the bar codes, they can say, "Oh yeah, that's that weirdo."

This is a human neural brain cell attached to a Motorola. It says at the top, 68,000 microprocessor. If this was attached today to a fertilized human egg and implanted in a female you could have a child nine months from now that was bionic from birth. This is already possible. Every kid is a genius, it's just that we don't give them an opportunity to really look at it. We say "Don't," "Yes," "You can't do that."

I was told by the government some years ago when I had one of the first satellite dishes, "Oh, you can't have

that." And I asked, "Why not?" They couldn't really explain, but the mounties came down and they were going to arrest me. I told them to come back with a warrant, and I said, "Oh, could you make it before 4:00?" They said "Why?" I said, "Well, if you serve me with a warrant I will move this whole operation 17 feet across the border into Point Roberts, Washington, which is a piece of U.S. right across the Canadian border." And I said, "You'll be able to set your cameras up on the Canadian side and show me moving the business there, hiring Americans because the Canadian government didn't want me to hire Canadians." They never came back.

I suggest to young kids who ask, "What should we do?" I say, "Become an outlaw. Not somebody that operates within the law and breaks it, but somebody that grabs a piece of new technology and runs with it because the rest of them don't know about it." Nobody knew what an aeronautical engineer was until Orville Wright flew. And so if you grab this new technology and run with it, when they catch up to you, all they can ask you to do is write the book because you are the authority.

These are some of the new educational theaters you are going to see. They are IMAX theatres, four of them now at the Tokyo Expo at Osaka 90 where the screen is 80 feet high. It goes right over your head, wraps around you, and the floor is glass so there is another projection underneath and you feel you are on a flying carpet. It's not only a visual and emotional experience, it's a physical one, too. They can make you puke on cue.

And here are some of the ideas of seeing inside a human lung in a way it's never been seen before. These 16-minute movies cost \$32 million U.S. to produce. And seeing blood platelets going through your veins and arteries and your muscle structure and how it is in your arm. Ways of seeing and understanding that have never been done before, and this is what I say is the visual literacy.

We will have this decade or two decades maybe of a transitional period where we have to know how to read and write, but we are also going to have to start learning how to understand visualizations and other structures in the human body with sound that would make a rock star embarrassed; and ways of photographing using inflatable rafts lowered into the canopy, the top of the Amazonian Rain Forest, because that's where

the action is; wearing 3-D glasses, not like the old fashioned ones, but ones that change 30 frames a second. I think the new electronic theaters in these goggles, where the movie will be an inch and a half from your eyes, will do more for the drug problem than anything else. You will be able to take an electronic trip that is equal to or greater than an LSD trip. And since I have had LSD, mescaline and cylacidin when I was part of a medical research team in Hollywood's Psychiatric Hospital in New Westminster, I feel I can speak with more authority than most.

We used to have big dining rooms and they shrank down and we had a den. Now the dens are going to become an information, education and entertainment utility where everything from anywhere in the world will be able to be drawn up on your home screen and you'll be able to learn in a way that you were never able to learn in the past. And so, in a way, everybody in the audience is illiterate electronically. So, for those of you that are illiterate or partially so in the written sense, don't feel bad, you are all in the same group.

This is the greatest newsgathering room in the world. One thousand television video screens, 500 computers and printers and this is Ted Turner's CNN news network, now gathering news from 114 countries and selling it to 92 at the moment. Even President Bush and Saddam Hussein have been on television, and they don't listen to their intelligence reports any more; they get it first from CNN.

It's the way you look at the world; and if you see a crumbling world, that's all you're going to be able to achieve, whatever is possible in that world. But if you see a much brighter world, you are going to have unlimited horizons.

If you think what you know now is right and you are sure of it, I suggest you are in the same position as those people were 700 years ago who knew the world was flat. I think 85% of everything you were taught in school will be proven wrong. Some of it was right for the times, but it's not the same old game any more. It's a new game. You're not playing baseball; it's not just the rules that have changed, it's the game that's changed and the game is now highlie and hardly anybody knows how to spell it.

Well, if anybody wants to see the rest afterwards, if it's OK with my puppet master here, I'll see you.

Effective Programs for Adult Literacy Instruction: The L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program

William T. Fagan

University of Alberta

The dropout rate from adult literacy programs is estimated to range from one third to one half of those enrolled; furthermore, participants are more likely to drop out in the first half of the program (Calamai, 1988; Hunter & Harman, 1979; Rigg & Kazemek, 1983). Rigg and Kazemek suggest that one reason for this high attrition rate is that the programs do not meet the needs of the adult learners. Thistlewaite (1983, p. 16) advises that literacy programs must be based on a knowledge of the "general characteristics of adult learners, specifically as they apply to reading (and writing)."

The purpose of this paper is to describe the L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program, a program for adult literacy learners that involves a comprehensive approach based on understanding literacy and the needs of the learners.

The L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program

The structure of this program was based on research with eight groups of 26 subjects each: average and low-achieving grade 3, 6, and 9 students, mainstream society adults and prison inmates. Both groups of adults were comparable in terms of their reading and writing achievement levels. The mean for achievement in reading was grade 5, while for writing it was about a grade 3 level. The overall research question was "What factors enhance or militate against school success?" Information in response to this question on strategy use and effectiveness, personal goals and interpersonal factors formed the basis for the study. L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E, an acronym, expresses the program goals—literacy independence towards enabling, responsibility, attainment, trust, and excellence.

Literacy independence was defined as competency in reading and writing, and oral language, and the use of this knowledge in coping with reading and writing tasks and oral language situations (reading and writing are stressed in the program). Such competency should enable individuals to read and write in a variety of situations or contexts. Literacy independence is rarely achieved by the adult learners becoming dependent on the program and the instructor. On the contrary, learners must become responsible for their own learning as far as possible. This includes not only engaging in reading and writing tasks on their own outside of

the program, but also their behavior within a class situation in deciding when and how learning is ineffective.

Attainment refers to that part of the program where specific individual needs are provided for. These may range from wanting to write a cheque, write a letter, or complete an income tax form. Math skills may also be desired to be attained by the learners, and provision would be made to include math activities in the program. Trust must be bidirectional. The learners must trust in themselves that they can become independent literacy users; they must also trust that the program provided for them is the best possible program. On the other hand, the instructor must trust in the participants as learners, and must trust in himself/herself to offer the best possible program. The ultimate goal or outcome is that of excellence, which is simply defined as a satisfaction for the attainment of one's goals.

Implementing the Program

Four phases of the program have been identified: Pre-Entry, Entry, Active and Evaluative.

The Pre-Entry phase entails two main tasks. The instructor must understand him/herself as a person and as an instructor. A questionnaire is provided for this purpose. The second task at this phase is to provide a program that is balanced with respect to reading and writing tasks. Tasks or activities to be selected for inclusion (there are 63 and tasks and 61 supplementary tasks to draw from) may focus on (a) strategies within text, (b) strategies for text, (c) activities related to text, (d) activities extending text, and (e) enjoyment of text.

Strategies within text involve becoming familiar with word meaning, word structure, interword relationships, etc. Strategies for text include developing a larger perspective of text such as understanding the purpose/goal for reading/writing, the use of background knowledge or prior information, and recognizing and using various genres. Activities related to text focus on support knowledge or skills which is not developed within a written text. An activity of this sort would entail vocabulary building through discussion and questioning. Activities extending text involve exposing the learners to a wide range of reading and writing tasks that may be found in many contexts and used for a variety of functions. Finally, enjoyment of text refers simply to the adult learners' reading and writing for pleasure and without constraints.

During the Entry phase, the main goal of the instructor is to get to know the learners. Questionnaires are also provided for this purpose and help the instructor empathize with the learners.

The Active phase brings together the instructors and learners in a meaningful and productive learning and interpersonal environment. It is during this phase that the goals of enabling, responsibility, attainment and trust are actualized.

A focal point of the Active phase is the methodology which the instructor employs in helping the learners become literacy independent. The 63 main tasks/activities and the 61 supplementary ones entail a suggested procedure for their development.

The specific methodology employed is referred to as learning with insight and control through interactive teaching (LIC:IT). In brief, the learners must be as involved as possible in their learning (with the assistance of the instructor when necessary) in understanding the requirements of the task and they must be able constantly to monitor their learning progress and needs.

The specific methodology for teaching specific tasks cannot be separated from the overall goals of the program. Consequently, 11 principles are discussed that should guide the implementation of each task or activity. These are:

Instructional Principles

1. Both instructor and learner should understand the rationale for the reading or writing task. The task (exercise, activity) should be meaningful in terms of the learner's reading and writing needs. If learners cannot see the relevance, then dropping it should be considered; the learner's commitment to learn may not be present.
2. Both instructor and learner should be aware of the objective (the *what*) and whether it is knowledge/skills or strategy based.
3. Both instructor and learners (within reason) should understand *how* learning takes place.
4. Interactive behavior must be focused on developing insight and control.
5. Instructors should become aware of learners' auditory and visual strengths. Some learners learn best through the auditory mode and some learn best through the visual mode, while others learn equally well by either mode.
6. Learners must be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.
7. The knowledge/skill or strategy being developed must always be presented in a text and/or context of reading or writing.
8. The instructor should "keep on track." This means the instructor must avoid referring to information of which the learner is unaware or making irrelevant or "aside" comments.
9. The instructor should give positive and appropriate feedback.
10. The instructor must make provision for transfer of learning to related tasks.
11. The instructor must be a skilled and knowledgeable observer.

A questionnaire involving criteria for each of these principles is provided which instructors can use to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching and of the adults' learning.

While the Evaluative phase is mentioned last, this is interactive with the other phases. For example, in the Pre-Entry phase the instructor evaluates him/herself as an instructor. During the Entry phase he/she evaluates his/her knowledge of the learners, including their goals, their commitment to becoming independent readers and writers and circumstances that may facilitate or interfere with their learning. During the Active phase, the main evaluative task of the instructor is to monitor the effectiveness of the ongoing teaching and learning. During this phase, the learners also evaluate their progress in terms of their goals. At the conclusion of the program (and throughout) the instructor must evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in light of the instructor's expertise.

Conclusion

Literacy programs for adult learners must provide a fine balance between the role of the instructor and the role of the learner. While the instructor has the expertise to enhance an adult's learning in a particular situation (in this case a program), the learners cannot be passive participants. Instead, they must be part of a cooperative learning experience in which they can not only provide input regarding their learning outcomes, but also monitor their progress towards these outcomes. The L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program provides for this kind of cooperative endeavor.

References

- Calamai, P. (1988). *Broken words: Why five million Canadians are illiterate*. Ottawa: Southam News.
- Hunter, C., & Harman, D. (1979). *Adult illiteracy in the United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rigg, P., & Kazemek, f. (1983). Adult illiteracy in the USA: Problems and solutions. *Convergence*, 16, 24-30.
- Thistlewaite, L. (1983). The adult disabled reader: An independent learner. *Lifelong Learning*, 7, 16-17, 28.
- Note: A description of the L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program is now available (The L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program: A Resource Book for Literacy Instructors) and may be obtained from the Reading and Language Centre, 1-135 Education North, University of Alberta, Edmonton T6G 2G5.

The Computer Curriculum Corporation Instructional System

James R. Mellan

Columbia Institute of Canada, Calgary

Introduction

It is a pleasure to be able to share ideas concerning computer assisted instruction (CAI), sometimes referred to as an integrated learning system (ILS). This discussion is not intended to express any ideas concerning the fear that organizations will replace staff with technology. I believe that CAI is an important tool that, when utilized effectively, will enhance the learning environment and empower the learner. The Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) Learning System is the focus of this paper. Specifically, I will explain how CAI can be utilized to address the literacy problem facing Canada.

History of the CCC Learning System

CCC was founded by Dr. Patrick Suppes of Stanford University's Mathematics Institute in the late 1960s. CCC is a proven, integrated learning system used in Canada and the United States in many employment and occupational programs, in school districts and colleges, and in private businesses as an aid to human resource development and training. The system offers individualized instruction across the curriculum for all ages and levels (ECS to Adult), interactive courses interfaced with graphic images and sound, and automated management of the learner's placement and instructional sequencing.

There are over 3,000 course hours available in five major curriculum areas—mathematics, reading, language arts, science and computer education. All subject areas include General Education Development (GED) preparation, except for the computer education area. Within the language arts area are courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Japanese. A special feature of the CCC Learning System is its speech capability which enhances the delivery of the lower level skills in the courses. This courseware is continually being updated to accommodate changes to curriculum and changes in teaching/learning methodologies.

Special and Unique Features of the CCC Learning System

Successful CAI offers a rich complement to teaching and a new dimension to the process of learning. For

CAI to be effective it must cover its subject thoroughly, constantly interact with the student, engage and motivate the student, and create opportunities to learn through exploration and problem solving. These qualities are essential to CCC's goal of helping each student learn to his or her full potential. The best CAI would adapt instruction to meet the needs of each individual student to ensure that each student masters course content, using the minimum time required.

Benefits of Individualization

1. The student experiences continual success because the system adapts to the student's performance.
2. Instructional approaches used in the courses take into account a wide range of learning styles.
3. Students consistently experience rapid gains when using the CCC system.
4. Time spent in CCC sessions are focused and productive.
5. The system evaluates his or her performance in each skill area and automatically prescribes the next exercise.
6. Instructors are free to spend more time teaching.
7. The CCC system can simultaneously serve a diverse population.

A fifth grader working at the third-grade level can work right alongside a classmate working at the seventh-grade level. A system that serves elementary students during the day can serve adults at night. This means that the system is not only student-effective but also cost-effective.

Comprehensive Courses

One CCC system can deliver individualized instruction to as many as 5,000 students. The system is able to adapt instruction to a wide range of student performances. To accomplish this the system must have access to a vast amount of instructional material. CCC has spent over 20 years building the largest pool of CAI available to education. Their courses support the entire basic curriculum in mathematics, reading and language skills and they span the ECS through middle school levels as well as adult basic education (ABE). Over two thirds of their courses have been developed or significantly revised during the last four years. The CCC courses fol-

low objectives from standardized tests, popular textbooks and district curriculum guidelines.

Tutorials appear the instant a student makes an error. These "contingent tutorials" use the actual error to show where the student went wrong and how to solve the exercise correctly. The system generates exercises from a library of numbers, words and graphic objects. Thus the variety of exercises available for course delivery is virtually unlimited.

Initial Assessment and Placement

Once a student is enrolled in a course, the first task of the CCC System is to find the student's functional level in the course. CCC identifies this process as initial placement motion (IPM). IPM works "invisibly" while the student completes the first 10 sessions of a course. To find the student's current level IPM uses adaptive testing techniques. Instead of testing every student with the same test items, IPM continually adapts the level of the exercises until the student is working at an appropriate level. It does this by evaluating the student's overall performance after each of the first 10 sessions. Very high or very low scores mean that the student will be moved up or down in all skill areas in a course. It is recommended that the initial enrollment be based on a score from an achievement test or an instructor's initial learner assessment. Once IPM finds the functional level, the student continues through the course guided by CCC's normal individualization process.

Strands in Courses

Much of the curriculum is organized into skill strands, one strand for each of the skill areas in the course. Each strand consists of instruction and exercises organized according to the level of difficulty. As a student progresses in a strand, the material becomes more and more challenging. The order is indexed by a scale divided into 10ths or 100ths of a grade year.

The system tracks a student's progress in each strand and makes adjustments for very high and low performances. The exercises in each strand are organized by skill objectives. The system keeps track of the skills the learner is currently working on, the skill already mastered and the skills yet to be presented. During a single session, the student does exercises selected from all the strands instead of working on one skill at a time. Research explains that this mixed presentation is more effective than block learning where students work on one skill at a time.

Weighting of Strands

Each strand is weighted separately. At each level within a course some strands are weighted more than others.

This weighting is determined according to the relative emphasis a particular skill receives in textbooks and on standardized tests; this weighting is known as the curriculum distribution. Learners will experience more exercises in heavily weighted strands. For each student, however, the system weights low performance strands more heavily; this weighting is known as the student distribution. The system constantly adjusts the curriculum distribution based on the student distribution. After the completion of each exercise, the system readjusts the student distribution based on the student's performance.

Assessment of Mastery

The CCC System expects the student is learning, not taking a test. The system analyzes a learner's responses and determines whether the student has mastered a particular skill objective. CCC determines mastery by analyzing a student's answer pattern. As the student completes exercises in a specific skill, the system keeps track of the sequence of right and wrong answers in that skill. This sequence shows when the probability is very high that the student will do the next exercise correctly. In other words, the system knows precisely when the student has mastered the skill and is ready for the next skill objective. Only with a computer can one keep track of this amount of data and make continual assessments concerning mastery.

Branching Strategies

The system individualizes by branching to special strategies when a student has difficulty mastering a particular skill objective. Normally, a student gets a "mixed presentation" of exercises. This is what happens when a learner requires extra help:

First, the student would receive a block of exercises from the weak strand. This is called "sequential practice." If performance improves, the student will return to a mixed presentation.

If not, a second strategy is triggered. This strategy combines sequential practice with interactive tutorials that guide the student step by step through the exercise.

If the student still has difficulty, the system will present "prerequisite instruction" where the student reviews skills on which mastery of this particular skill depend.

A tiny percentage of students experience all the branching strategies without showing mastery. The unmastered skill is brought to the instructor's attention on the student's performance reports generated by the system. This skill is then repeated or marked for later review.

Remedial Strategies

The Individualized Remedial Review implemented in CCC's newest courses assumes that a skill that is difficult for a student may become easier after the student gains experience in other concepts and skills. A skill that the student has difficulty mastering is marked for review. The student then moves to the next skill objective in the strand. The system will automatically present review work from the marked skill during future sessions. The amount of time the student spends in review depends on the number of skill objectives marked for review.

This strategy is effective when the difficult skill is not a prerequisite to the next skill. In such cases, the learner's exposure to other learning activities and delayed reintroduction of the difficult skill can improve his or her performance.

Response to Student Input

The richness of the interaction between student and computer is another way a CAI system can individualize. If the computer is to become a true tutor, it must accept diverse student input and know how to construct an original and appropriate response. Contingent tutorials appear the instant a learner makes an error. The system uses the error to restate the calculation or show the intermediate steps necessary to find a solution. The learner has another chance to complete the exercise. He or she will be rewarded for a correct answer, although the system will still count the response as incorrect. The learner having trouble with this type of exercise may also see a more general tutorial. In these tutorials, an owl figure takes the student step by step through a sample exercise. Other features that individualize and enrich the exercise level include: answer messages that positively reinforce the student's answer ("Good work, Jim."); self-pacing (up the time-out limits set by the instructor); audio messages, including audio repeat; tutorials selected by the student; error analysis—distinguishing mistyped answers; learning resources and tools available from the icon bar, such as a glossary.

Ways the Student Can Respond

We can also see the richness of the system/learner interaction in the ways the system accepts responses from the student. The CCC System accepts responses from the student at three levels. In order to build problem-solving skills, many experiences emphasize the process of finding an answer. For example, some ask the student to experiment with solutions before making a final choice. In these courses, the student controls the experiment. The computer responds without judging, but coaches the student in the process.

Many courses make special resources available to the student. For example, students can use an on-screen ruler or calculator and reference material such as a glossary or spell checker. Using the mouse, students can match objects by drawing lines, move objects to form a sequence or pattern, answer a question by highlighting relevant text, select an answer by marking several choices, and of course the student uses the keyboard when appropriate. One of the major challenges in computer-assisted instruction is the acceptance of different correct answers to the same exercise. For example, in the CCC course *Writer's Express*, one exercise allows different correct sentences to be made from the same pool of sentence parts. In the *Computer Literacy and Logic* courses, different answers getting the same result will be counted correct.

Canadian Utilization

To date, the CCC Learning System is being used as an instructional learning tool in eight sites across Canada, two of which are operating using remote (distance delivery) capabilities. Canadian sites are using either the Unix or MS-DOS operating systems targeted to a variety of audiences, from teenagers classified as students at risk to adults requiring academic upgrading. At Columbia Institute of Canada, in Calgary, a Unix 30-station lab is successfully being used to develop positive learning experiences with handicapped learners and adults in career training programs. A new product introduced in the spring of 1990 is attracting much interest because it delivers the curriculum and provides the powerful computer-managed system on one CD-ROM disk. This SOLO product operates under MS-DOS and can accommodate any third-party software, which makes the system very versatile as well as portable. For the first time, a powerful teaching/learning tool is available for organizations experiencing budget restraint or for organizations wishing to experience the CCC Learning System prior to commitment of funds for a larger system.

Conclusion

In summary, the CCC Learning System will never replace the instructor, but it provides a fabulous tool that enhances the learning environment and provides instructors with information to deal directly with identified learning problems. The CCC Learning System is a powerful tool that empowers the learner, provides evaluation and adaptation for every student response, advances learners based on probability of success, and addresses critical thinking skills. For these reasons the system could enhance literacy programs. The CCC Learning System is an individualized process that is nonthreatening and produces positive learning results. Adults who have experienced failure in regular educa-

tional systems require an alternative, and this system can provide that alternative. The instructor/facilitator has computer-generated reports to aid the learner directly experiencing specific difficulty. The CCC Learn-

ing System offers a successful alternative that empowers the learner by turning over the responsibility for learning to the learner.

Using Peer Response Groups in ESL Writing Classes

James H. Bell

Mount Royal College, Calgary

Why use peer response groups in ESL writing classes? The session participants at the Literacy Conference in Edmonton listed many good reasons. Using peer response groups:

- fosters student independence, self-direction, and responsibility;
- integrates speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a goal-oriented activity;
- manifests writing as a process;
- helps students learn to collaborate effectively on writing, something they will probably have to do in the future;
- encourages students to make friends and acquaintances, possibly across traditional barriers of age, race, and so on;
- changes the instructor's role in ways that are refreshing, challenging, and fulfilling, resulting in professional growth; and
- gives the instructor a better written product to read.

Almost any one of these reasons would be sufficient justification for trying peer response groups. Together they create a powerful rationale for the ESL professional, but results are not guaranteed. Still needed is a sound, appropriate method, well implemented.

In my experience, the most common writing group procedure for English as a first language is inappropriate for ESL students. I created a more structured approach, a significantly different method, a transition between no writing groups and the free groups advocated by Elbow (1973) in *Writing Without Teachers*. The method worked so well with my upper-intermediate and advanced ESL writers (there was an equal mix of immigrants and visa students in the college classes) that I am passing it on to you. I supply a brief rationale for each step so that others may see some of the factors considered and adapt the procedure to their own situation.

How to Set up Writing Groups in the Classroom

Explain why the class will use peer response groups as an integral part of the course. Students who are products of teacher-centered schooling may need to be

convinced to try something so different. Furthermore, as adults, students deserve to know why they are doing things. Describe clearly how the groups should work, and supply or have the students make brief outlines of the steps the group will follow. I outline six steps:

1. Question (writer);
2. Read (writer aloud and peers silently);
3. Silence (writer and peers);
4. Answer questions (peers);
5. Respond—positive and negative (peers);
6. Work on something (writer with peers).

Students need a simple model of what the group will do, and it must be fully understood so that the group can stay on track when the discussion gets hectic. If possible, show a peer response group in action, live or on videotape. Seeing a successful group lessens student anxiety, engenders a feeling for the pace of group activity, and makes the steps followed in the writing groups come to life.

Two or three weeks after classes start, or as soon as you have enough knowledge of your students and their writing, create groups for the semester, with the possibility of changes after a midterm reassessment. If class periods are 50 minutes in length and attendance is good, form teams of three. Larger groups can seldom finish responding to all the essays in the allotted time. Form groups which will work and grow rather than self-destruct.

To illustrate the care with which groups are formed and to reveal some of the factors to consider, a one- to two-hour planning process is described. First, I divide the class into high, medium, and low ability levels. This avoids the problem of good writers giving but not receiving substantial assistance. Within each level I try to create groups where no two people speak the same first language. This makes English the language of discussion. I also aim for males and females in each group. One of the salient cultural differences for many students is the relatively equal status of men and women in Canada, and writing groups are good places in which to work on this issue. Next, I place a shy, retiring student from the good or average writers with two poor writers to form groups. The poorer writers receive substantial help while the taciturn, more talented writers gain more confidence and interpersonal skills. While forming groups, I constantly consider

nationalities, personalities, and friendships. This process is more complicated than saying to the class, "OK, form groups of three," but creating teams carefully minimizes the chances of destructive group dynamics.

Each time a group meets, it chooses a timer whose job it is to ensure that each essay receives equal consideration. The group may not move on to another paper until it has spent the allotted time on the paper under discussion. The first semester that I tried writing groups, I did not require timing, and the most common complaint was that some papers were slighted.

When the groups start to deal with papers, they proceed as follows for each student.

1. The writer asks for assistance with one element—or at the most two elements—in his or her essay. Writers take responsibility for seeking help. Equipped with evaluation skills taught in class, students must evaluate their own writing and decide what aspect requires the most work. This is an important skill for students to grow less dependent upon instructor judgment. Furthermore, asking for help with something specific gives writers some control over what is said in the groups.
2. Without apologies and explanations, the writer reads. Reading aloud not only provides speaking and listening practice, but helps students spot errors aurally and develop a sense of how writing can sound. Rough drafts are supposed to be rough, and the group will help members as required through the reading process. Other group members listen and read a single copy. Because of limited writing, pronunciation, and listening skills, group members usually need a copy in order to understand what a writer has finished reading. Nystrand (1986) found that even with English as a first language students, having a copy of the paper correlated with substantial as opposed to superficial comments.
3. When the writer has finished reading, there are at least 60 seconds silence. Group members need time to think, to look back through the paper, to marshal support for their answer to the writer's question.
4. The group members answer the writer's questions in turn; they should support their answers. Answering the writer's questions reinforces that the writers are in charge and that the group is to help. Writers have not been tossed to a pack of vicious critics. When writers have their concerns addressed, they feel that the peer response group is useful, that it actually helps them revise. That is also why it is important that group members support answers. "I liked your introduction" tells an author a little. In contrast, the following response reveals invaluable detail how the prose is working

on people: "I liked your introduction (why?) because it caught my interest (why?) and, like so many immigrants, I often think of visiting my home country. So as soon as you mentioned your trip home, I wondered if it met your expectations."

5. Group members respond more freely to the composition, pointing to something they like and to something they think needs improving. They explain their responses. This freer response is crucial; writers have tried to communicate, and group members let them know where they have succeeded and failed. Because students, like instructors, tend to dwell on the failures, a positive comment is required to balance every criticism. For the first essay of the semester, I allow only positive comments in this step. Not only is praise a good teacher, but students often need encouragement in the face of rewriting. "Pointing," a technique borrowed from Elbow (1973, pp. 85-86), engenders specificity. Students should actually point to passages and say, for example, "The thing I like best in your essay was the example you used in the second paragraph here, where you say ..."
6. The writer chooses **something to work on** and the group helps. Group members must do more than critique, they must also create. This builds team spirit and supplies further evidence that the writing group is worthwhile. Moreover, writers often realize that something needs revising, but they do not know how to proceed. Writers can try out revisions on the group, and group members can suggest revisions and revision methods to the writer.

When the group is commenting on a draft, writers take notes, preferably marginal notes. If you want to test the necessity of this procedure, at the end of class ask students who presented papers early in the period what comments were made on their essays. I have found that they usually remember about half. Beaumont (1978) found a positive correlation between taking notes during response group discussions and making successful revisions.

When the group offers feedback, writers do not argue or offer justifications and rationalizations. Instead, if comments perplex them, they ask for clarification and additional information. After all, the writer's principal purpose is to receive feedback. The writer can select and reject the advice later.

Meanwhile, the instructor monitors. Is the group following the procedure? If not, tell the members. (I do not always insist that students adhere strictly to steps 5 and 6; if the power of peer response is working, I let the students direct the discussion as they see fit.) Are the students making substantive comments? Note that this

does not ask whether they are making the same comments that an instructor might make. Is a group having trouble sorting trivial suggestions from substantive ones? If so, pick the most perspicacious comment and say that you agree with it. That's all. In order to monitor in this way, you usually need to sit in a group for the presentation and discussion of one paper. Thus more than three or four groups per period is awkward. I have half the class attend one period, and half the next.

Finally, praise the groups or the class for good group work.

A Peer Response Group at Work

Session participants watched a 20-minute video of a group at work. The group followed the six-step procedure in a flexible fashion and recommended that the writer alter the two elements of her composition that the participants, as teachers, would have singled out for revision. In her final draft, the writer made both suggested changes. She also changed her evaluation of the short story the group was critiquing, not because the group attempted to persuade her (it did not try), but probably because the other writers led her by their written examples to a more sophisticated analysis of the story. For reasons we could only speculate about, the writer made more grammatical errors in her final draft than in her rough draft.

Conclusion

I designed this semistructured method as a transition from the teacher-centered classrooms most students know to the more free-form writing groups students may join in the future. I have been happy with the results; so have most students. On an anonymous, open-ended questionnaire distributed at the end of one semester, students said that the two things they liked best about writing class were learning to write different types of essays and working in writing groups. All recommended using peer response groups again. To increase the chances of success for writing groups, establish a classroom context hospitable to group work. I believe such a climate is built by many small things such as the following: when students ask questions, have other students answer on occasion; when you ask a question and a student responds, do not always restate the answer; and when a student adds a significant concept to the lesson, incorporate it more than once, mentioning the student's name. Such techniques help students gain confidence as knowledgeable participants in learning.

References

- Beaumont, P.A. (1978). *A descriptive study of the tutor in a conference on writing*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of San Diego.
- Elbow, P. (1973). *Writing without teachers*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Nystrand, M. (1986). Learning to write by talking about writing: A summary of research on intensive peer review in expository writing instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In M. Nystrand (Ed.), *The structure of written communication*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Literacy for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Doris Goetz

Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Edmonton

Educators and agencies of the blind are concerned about the poor literacy skills among blind and visually impaired people. The problem seems to be increasing and deserves serious attention. Why does this situation exist and what may be some of the causes of these problems? I believe three causes exist:

1. There is a perceived decline in the availability and use of braille.
2. There is a lack of skilled teachers and teacher training programs training teachers to work with blind and visually impaired students.
3. Technology—does it promote literacy or hinder literacy skills?

Use of Braille

Braille is a system of reading and writing comprised of various combinations of dots taken from a base of a six-dot cell, and is accessible by the sense of touch. It is possible to transfer this six-dot system into any language, and in addition to the literary code, there is a code for mathematics and sciences and for music notation. Braille is the most efficient and effective way for blind people to learn the intricacies of spelling, sentence structure and grammar, for doing math, for learning to read music, for notetaking and labelling and other personal uses. It gives the reader control over the written word, leaving interpretation and speed up to the individual.

However, because braille consists of dots, it is bulky and somewhat cumbersome. The literary code consists of numerous short forms and abbreviations governed by a rather complex set of rules. Thus the learning of braille by most newly blind adults becomes a major undertaking, and only the most highly motivated are proficient braille users. The use of braille by blind children depends to a great extent on the attitudes of parents, teachers and peers. Blind children do not have the same exposure to the written word as do seeing children, so they usually start school somewhat behind their peers. Statements like: "This child uses print; this child has to use braille," puts a negative connotation on braille, making it appear inferior rather than equal. People who do not know braille or its importance cover up their uncertainty, fear and lack of knowledge by avoiding it and encouraging blind people to appear more normal and more efficient by avoiding braille.

What about those people who are neither blind nor sighted, who in fact have some useful vision? These people should of course be encouraged to use their remaining vision as effectively as possible. But there are some people whose print reading ability, even with magnifiers and other help, is so painfully slow, and who become so fatigued with the effort to read that they avoid reading. In these cases, braille would likely be more efficient and faster.

Education

Most blind children are educated in classrooms in their neighborhood schools. This is as it should be. There is concern about the quality of education many of them receive, however. In northern Alberta, if the child is lucky, he or she lives in a school district which provides the services of itinerant teachers. These teachers, trained in working with blind and visually impaired children, teach the special skills needed in order to function as a blind and visually impaired student. Often the itinerant teachers have large caseloads making it necessary to spread themselves thin and provide each child with a minimum of service. Many blind and visually impaired children are provided with teachers' aides who, although they may know braille, have had no training working with blind and visually impaired children. Lack of knowledge and training for the teachers' aides has sometimes resulted in the aide doing work for the student or overprotecting the student.

In northern Alberta schools have access to consultants who provide assistance to school personnel. However, this service is available only where the child has more than one handicap. Thus, where the child is blind but has no other handicaps, the school receives no assistance. Most teachers have neither experience nor training working with blind and visually impaired children, and many don't know where to find resources available to them or to the children. Teacher training programs in the field of blindness are available at universities far away, making it difficult for teachers and teachers' aides to take advantage of them.

These problems result in a negative attitude toward braille, and children also develop poor attitudes toward braille and reading. As a result blind and visually impaired children often have poor reading and spelling skills. They have difficulty with formatting and re-searching, often resulting in inferior work. Inferior work is often accepted of these children because teachers and teachers' aides are likely to have low expecta-

tions of these students. This is subtly passed on to the students who then end up with very low self-esteem and low expectations of themselves.

Despite these problems, some visually impaired and blind students thrive and learn. Many, however, drop out before or after high school. Statistics Canada Health and Limitations Survey of 1986 points out that blind and visually impaired people receive a lower level of education than do nondisabled people. Given the problems in learning basic literacy skills, is it really surprising that blind and visually impaired people drop out of school early? It doesn't make them competitive in the job market. There are limited jobs for school dropouts, and fewer still if they are visually impaired or blind.

Technology

What of computers and other technology? We live in a very exciting time for visually impaired and blind people because of advances in technology. We now have taperecorded books, the Optacon and Kerzweil Personal Reader, TV readers and high power magnifiers. We have computers with large print and braille displays and with voice output, and these have spell check and formatting abilities. There is the VersaBraille, Braille and Speak and other note taking devices, which in turn can be hooked up to print and braille printers for paper copies. Never before has it been possible to put material into braille as quickly and as easily. Never before have people with very low vision had the opportunity to see so well. It's wonderful! Much information which most people take for granted simply has not been available to a blind person. Therefore, anything and everything which can be used to gain information as quickly and effectively as possible is crucial. The technical advances can help to access, speed up and gather information, but these technologies should be in addition to and not instead of good basic skills.

We often find people who were taught to use talking calculators rather than how to do math, to use tapes rather than learn to read and write and spell, and to use a keyboard rather than braille and handwriting skills. Technical equipment is very expensive. Most parents and individual blind people cannot afford to purchase it. There may be special equipment in a school or college, but what about the home? How can students study and work at home? If a student does not have basic skills, the student may be severely handicapped for weeks or even months if mechanical things break down. Therefore, it is possible for technical equipment to promote dependency rather than independence. I have never had my slate and stylus break down in the middle of a meeting or class, and braille books never have batteries that run low.

What of literacy programs? Can they play a role in solving the literacy problems for visually impaired and blind people? Unquestionably yes! The CNIB and other agencies serving blind and visually impaired people are not educators. Literacy skills need instructors trained in that field. A survey of literacy programs in Canada was not encouraging, only two programs had special facilities for visually impaired and blind students. If literacy instructors are expected to teach visually impaired and blind students, then they should be provided with the knowledge and understanding to do their jobs. It's not enough to know just a little bit about braille, or to know a bit about equipment. They must understand the problems low vision and blindness create, and have a full understanding of the capabilities and strengths of each individual student. Also, materials and equipment must be available for each student according to his/her needs, whether it be in large print, braille and/or technical equipment.

It is quite appalling that in an age where there is so much reading material available in so many different forms, that there should be so many blind and visually impaired people who are functionally illiterate.

Prepackaged Formats or Participatory Approaches? Relevant Options and Strategies for Adult Literacy Practitioners

Michael Collins

University of Saskatchewan

Jody Hanson

Northern Lights School Division, SK

The first part of this presentation highlights major shortcomings in the current tendency towards prepackaging and standardization of curriculum, and examines briefly prospects for alternative approaches. In part two, the prepackaging tendency is addressed from more explicit personal, political, and practical perspectives.

Critical Junctures in Curriculum Development (Michael Collins)

In 1982, the Department of Advanced Education in Alberta published an impressive spread sheet for "curriculum development purposes" entitled, "A Profile of Competencies for Adults Living in Alberta." This ambitiously conceived blueprint (everything one needs to know for getting by in Alberta) is an exemplar of the mechanistic, highly reductionistic, and prescriptive approach to adult basic education known as competency-based education (CBE). The terminology was new and cleverly devised. (Who among serious educators would want to deride the notion of competency?) But the mechanistic formulation was familiar stuff. One could guess the country of origin as well. We imported CBE belatedly, like most of our curriculum fads, from the United States.

The CBE phenomenon, however, is a little different. Its proponents have endeavored to impose standardized, prepackaged curriculum formats on a much wider scale than hitherto. Not all prepackaged curriculum formats are as mechanistic as CBE, but they do impose criteria determined outside of the classroom setting which tend to pre-empt the emergence of themes relevant to the immediate learning situation. It is true that prepackaged curriculum formats are systematically designed to keep students busy. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that systematic curriculum formats imposed from the outside and mere busyness on the part of students guarantee competent performance in the areas of writing, reading, and numeracy. In fact, investigations of CBE as the sterling example of prepackaged curriculum (Col-

lins, 1987) suggest that the quest for standardization it embodies has harmful consequences for learning processes. The prime concern of CBE is as much about management control of curriculum implementation as it is with the achievement of competent performance.

The increased reliance on prepackaged curriculum formats during the past decade has done nothing to diminish concerns about the incidence of illiteracy. If anything, the level of public concern has been raised during this period. Academic critiques on the shortcomings of curriculum formats such as CBE can be ignored if students are kept preoccupied. But there is now a sense among thoughtful teachers and administrators that this prepackaged stuff will not do the trick. It isn't practical, after all. Further, although prepackaged formats are full of references to skills (study skills, coping skills, life skills, aesthetic skills, and so on), they actually deskill teaching practice and learning capacities in a very profound way when they are allowed to shape the learning process. Teachers surrender their pedagogical role to become "facilitators," "classroom managers," or even "executive officers" for the deployment of prepackaged standardized curriculum. Ultimately, teachers become dispensable because there is a notion, justifiable in terms of a narrowly conceived technical rationality, that no special qualifications are needed to merely administer prepackaged standardized curriculum formats.

While prescriptive CBE curriculum modules have been largely confined to formal institutional settings, prepackaged curriculum, in one form or another, pervades the field of adult education as well as the public school system. It can be found in nonformal adult literacy projects and community-based education. Attempts have even been made to prepackage the work of Paulo Freire for ABE and ESL students. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1981) is reduced and distorted within a prepackaged pedagogy. Prepackaged pedagogy assumes an aura of normalcy, but its nonproblematic orientation signifies the erosion of vitality in modern adult education practice.

In the wake of excessive emphasis on prepackaged standardized formats, an awareness has emerged that current approaches to literacy education do not give learners and teachers enough say in curriculum development. There is a renewed interest in participatory lit-

eracy education as an alternative (Fingeret & Jurmo, 1989). Until now participatory approaches flourish more readily in community-based projects. At this juncture, however, with the growing realization that prepackaged and standardized formats such as CBE are fundamentally flawed, opportunities will arise for introducing participatory literacy education into formal institutional settings.

Participatory literacy education entails a commitment to the development of contextually relevant curriculum and materials within the classroom. This does not preclude an incorporation of carefully selected materials from outside the classroom. Such incorporation, however, should not be prescribed through a standardized curriculum designed by outside experts. Participatory literacy education calls for teachers to have confidence in their own competence and professionalism.

It would be naive to believe that participatory literacy education projects are not constrained by both corporate and bureaucratic interests. The best of them, however, are more critically alert to the nature of the power relationships with which they have to contend. They are thus in a better position to identify the interests of their students.

Literacy Teaching Aids or Dominant Culture Reproduction? (Jody Hanson)

International Literacy Year, 1990, is the latest educational cause célèbre. While no one would dispute that adults who want to become literate should have the opportunity to do so, this part of our presentation argues that in order for literacy to be understood, it must be viewed in a larger socioeconomic and political context. Literacy is not dealt with here from the perspective of individual experiences. Rather, literacy trends and prepackaged materials, which represent the ideological development of Western pedagogical thought, are viewed from a class, race and gender standpoint. A number of questions are raised. Specifically, whose interests are being served by the literacy movement? Why are prepackaged materials so readily adopted in literacy programs? What role do the issues of class, race and gender play in the development of materials? And, finally, why are nonliterate skills no longer celebrated as being useful?

The ruling classes in Europe eventually accepted universal primary education, because the power elite came to realize that public schooling would produce more effective workers. Training a working class to further the interests of the industrial revolution was no small task. As the displaced peasants moved into the cities to seek employment they encountered numerous problems, which led to the form of culture shock. This

manifested itself in family breakdown, alcoholism, and alienation.

With the advent of public state supported schools, the work force became more passive, more receptive to the work ethic. Besides teaching the "3 Rs," schools also served to indoctrinate the masses into the prevailing ideology that supported capitalist development. The industrial revolution, with the assistance of the public school, converted the landless peasants into an effective and regulated work force.

Many contemporary reports on literacy stress how much industry loses by employees not being able to read and write: the machinery breakdown, the incorrect routing, the lost time. However, the dominant ideology is sustained by the availability of both literate and illiterate employees. Literacy and illiteracy is another working class division. Isn't illiteracy often used to justify low wages? And what are corporations really doing about making their employees literate? How many employers give their employees paid time to learn to read? After all, middle and upper management benefit from professional development; so why not the workers?

Who exactly serves to profit from prepackaged materials? Have you recently consulted the catalogues for current prices of materials? Quite remarkable, aren't they? If I had the ideological disposition to consider investing in the stock market, companies producing literacy materials would certainly be considered as a profitable investment possibility.

While prepackaged literacy materials are touted as supporting universal themes, I suggest that they reflect white, male, middle-class values. In addition to teaching people how to read in a limited sense, the materials also teach them how to be good workers. The work ethic is thus reinforced through the deployment of standardized learning materials.

Prepackaged materials support the idea of everyone learning the same thing. The educational "we" will decide what the uneducated "them" need to know. We will teach them to read, and remind them at the same time that the dominant hegemony is the correct one.

Granted, prepackaged materials make a teacher's life much easier. Basing a course on students' interests requires more work on the part of an instructor—ferreting materials out of newspapers and magazines, searching the libraries for appropriate readings—all very time consuming.

Another point I want to raise is that literacy is a poverty issue. Which socioeconomic class do most illiterates come from? The poor and working class may be interested in learning to read street signs, but it won't help them with substandard and slum housing. Reading

labels on tins is, at best, repetitive. Filling out forms doth not full employment create. These prepackaged materials, I argue, are out of context because they do not deal with the day-to-day problems which illiterate adults face— racism, sexism, classism, unemployment, welfare cutbacks.

The prepackaged materials I consulted, both as a practitioner and as an administrator, were very white, very middle-class and very urban in orientation. They were less than relevant for the students I was working with or the area in which I was working. Northern Saskatchewan Indian and Métis people found the materials foreign. But then, the literacy package had been produced in Ontario. Toronto, even! A recent copy of *The English Times*, a low-reading level literacy paper produced by Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs, devoted an entire issue to the system of credit. The text was very pro-credit. The term "repossess" was only cited once—on the last page in the "Words to know" section: "pawnshop," "loan shark," "fronting," were not even mentioned: hardly a relevant view to present to members of the socioeconomically and educationally marginalized classes.

Race is another critical issue which the prepackaged materials do not address. Other than a few stereotypical Blacks and Oriental people, minority groups are not well represented in the materials. Nor are the issues facing minority people a topic of conversation. But then, discrimination is a five-syllable word and the prepackaged materials writers may consider it too difficult for illiterates to comprehend. They can experience it, but don't expect them to spell it.

Women's issues are not portrayed in literacy materials. Illiterate women tend to be from poor and working class homes. Often they are single parents, part of the downwardly mobile new poor that have come from abusive situations. Yet they are given materials portraying middle-class women concerned with shopping and nuclear family matters.

Why are the skills of those who are unable to read and write no longer considered valuable? When I read accounts of how illiterates hide the fact that they can't read, what impresses me most is that they manage to survive in a print world. The fact that an illiterate person can function in a literate society means that she/he is obviously bright and possesses adequate survival skills.

Working with northern Native political leaders has shown me that you don't have to be able to read and write to be powerful. Being able to speak extemporaneously, offer detailed explanations, and present materials in logical sequence are skills which people like me—those of us who hide behind the written text—would do well to learn.

I don't think the world of the illiterate is necessarily unproductive. Having lived in China for a year as a functional illiterate who only spoke 23 words of the language and could only read the character for women's toilet, I learned to survive quite nicely. In fact, I could get things done much faster than the American teacher who spoke and read Chinese. Part of the process was that I learned to trust other people. For example, I had a student write a note for me to take to the acupuncture doctor when I wanted to quit smoking. She must have written the right message as I have not smoked cigarettes for four years. (Too bad I didn't include cigars, but that is another story). I also came to realize that oftentimes it is just as easy not to know how to read and write. You learn to operate in another dimension.

And what about the people who don't want to become literate? Again, the literate "we" are busy rounding up the illiterate "them," making them feel guilty and inadequate. Literacy is "good for them." More than a touch evangelical by my assessment. A case of the happy illiterate is my Stanley Mission mother. She is 65. In order to learn to read she would have to learn English since materials are not readily available in Cree. Becoming literate would be a long process with limited rewards. If she has business to attend to, her children or grandchildren handle it for her. Tanning a moose hide, doing beadwork, or practicing her other traditional skills are done in her own language. Another relevant consideration is that N'mama's story collection makes the Grimm Fairy Tales seem like a limited edition. Learning to read stories to her grandchildren would mean that N'mama would have to learn to appreciate dominant culture hegemony. She doesn't identify with either Snow White or Cinderella. But, then, these characters were socially constructed to teach white, middle-class girls socially acceptable behavior.

To further this line of argument, my most vivid childhood recollections are the stories my grandfather told me about his life. How many people still tell stories to children? How many people can remember the maiden name of their maternal great-grandmother? In replacing the skills of an oral culture with those of a literate society we must remember that we, the literate too, are losing something of value.

References

- Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower Field Services Division. (1982). *A Profile of competencies for adults living in Alberta*. Edmonton: Author.
- Collins, M. (1987). *Competence in adult education: A new perspective*. Lanham/London: University Press of America.
- Fingeret, A., & Jurmo, P. (Eds.). (1989). *Participatory literacy education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss.
- Freire, P. (1981). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Consumer Talk: Materials for Development of Literacy Skills in a Consumer Context

Beth Jenkins and Gail Baron

Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs

Beth Jenkins

This session will provide information about the Consumer Talk publications, the development process of the Consumer Talk publications, and the availability of recently developed teaching notes.

I will emphasize the importance of consumer education in an English as a second language (ESL) program and in an adult basic education (ABE) program, and provide a context and rationale for putting together the Consumer Talk publications.

We all perform the practical tasks of finding accommodation, purchasing food, purchasing clothing and household goods, obtaining transportation, and of managing money. Those whose literacy skills are limited tend to have limited monetary resources as well. New Canadians do all of these tasks while adapting to a new culture and in an unfamiliar language. English as a second language teachers are able to help ease that stress somewhat by providing a setting in which consumer education can be used to develop language skills. Some of the special problems for new language learners, recent immigrants and those with limited literacy skills involve reading labels, finding product information and reading contracts. Information is the consumer's best tool in the marketplace. Those with limited language and literacy skills are handicapped because they have limited access to that information and limited ability to process that information.

People coming to North America have to deal with a new marketplace. Very often they must cope with supermarkets and shopping malls when previously they were used to the local market, small shops or specialty stores. They must function in the free market supply-demand economy, when earlier they were used to a centrally controlled economy. They may have been accustomed to bargaining for a price, and now they deal with a ticketed price. There are the issues of obtaining credit and loans to finance the purchase of consumer goods, door-to-door sales and mail-order sales, all of which have special rules and their own special language. These consumer issues, and the language bar-

riers new immigrants encounter, induce them to shop in small neighborhood stores where some merchants may know their language, but where the selection is limited and prices are higher.

People may also be curtailed in their shopping because of transportation limitations. They may be forced to deal with a local convenience store instead of travelling half way across the city to take advantage of bargains available in the large supermarkets. Consumer issues are of particular importance to low-income earners because of their limited financial resources.

In November 1986, the Minister of Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs (ACCA) and representatives from various levels of management within the department of ACCA came to a consensus that the department had been quite successful in providing information to the middle-income Albertan, but not to those outside the mainstream of Alberta society. This realization provided the catalyst that eventually led to the Consumer Talk project.

Gail Baron

I'm going to tell you briefly about how we developed Consumer Talk, where we got the idea, and why we went to print to reach a low-literacy audience. As Beth said, in 1986 our department decided that it should be reaching out to a larger audience. Traditionally, we served a middle-income audience through the sessions we offered on consumerism, or by phoning in or writing in for the traditional publications. These were aimed at a grades 8 to 10 and even a university level reading audience.

We determined the needs of a low-literacy audience by going to agencies that work with the audience—immigrant aid agencies such as Calgary Catholic Immigration Services, Catholic Social Services and the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers in Edmonton. We talked to teachers at Alberta Vocational College (AVC) about their needs and learned that the people they worked with had lots of consumer questions and, yes, the facilitators gave lots of answers, but they weren't always sure what their learners' rights or their own rights were. And, yes, they could use more materials with their learners.

We weren't being asked to step in and take over "consumer education"; we were asked to provide materials that facilitators could use. Thus Consumer Talk came about. We decided on a tabloid newspaper format by using the prototype of *English Express*. (*English Express* is a monthly newspaper published by Alberta Advanced Education for adult basic readers.)

Some people ask about the grade level of Consumer Talk. I can't give you a grade level because we haven't tested it with any particular readability test. Our philosophy on readability is that material is readable when readers can understand the language used and the ideas presented. The readers will find the material readable if they have a clear understanding of what the text is about. Each of our issues deals with a specific consumer issue, and if a person is not interested in that issue obviously he/she won't want to read it. As for the language used, we try to keep it relatively plain and written in a simple, clear format. We aim to use short, simple sentences and simple vocabulary. We use a lot of illustration to aid understanding. There is a philosophy that if writing is interesting, if lots of personal stories are included describing situations that are real and that relate to the reader's own situations, then there will be a desire to read and the effort to push oneself a little harder.

We have also attempted to include visible minorities in our drawings and photographs, but for obvious reasons not to depict only visible minorities. We want to be inclusive, but we don't want to single out a certain ethnic group to make it look like they're the only ones who have problems in the marketplace.

The topics for the first eight issues were chosen by our original advisory committee. These issues included landlord and tenant matters, buying a used car, shop around, door-to-door sales, and credit.

When the series was launched in 1989, we prepared an evaluation questionnaire and sent it out to facilitators in mostly ESL and ABE situations. The responses indicated that people liked the Consumer Talk format; they liked the information, but often they just didn't know what to do with it or they didn't have time to plan lessons around it. In many classroom situations, the mandate wasn't to teach consumer education; it was to teach language, and people were asking for quick and easy materials to use. Thus we came up with our worksheets. The first two pages, which are printed in colored ink, provide notes to facilitators that tell that the worksheets are to be used as duplicating masters. The worksheets are very simple. They don't present new information; they draw on the information that's already in Consumer Talk. Some exercises require the learner to simply read and respond; other exercises deal more directly with the lives of the learners and have

them do more creative things than just reading and responding.

The two new issues coming out in the spring of 1991 are Banking and Credit, and we're really excited about these issues. Our Banking issue moves into the realm of popular education. It doesn't specify how to fill out a deposit slip; lots of publications do that. Instead, it focuses on the problem of people on social assistance not able even to cash a cheque. We offer ways to get around that. We discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using a bank, and people in the issue talk about how they feel about banks.

The other spring issue is called Trouble with Credit, and it lets people know about their rights when they get into trouble with credit. People who can't pay their bills often call us; sometimes they are very scared because they don't know what can be taken from them. Some think their children can be taken from them! Well, that's simply not so. But some things can be, and this issue explains creditors' legal rights when debtors don't pay.

Beth Jenkins

Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs has 10 offices throughout the province. Anyone may contact our offices for copies of our free publications and for support from the Consumer Education staff in conducting staff inservices. Our advertising publications provide a good set to begin with. One can also order publications from the nearest regional office, and as the teaching notes become available, they will be distributed from the regional offices as well.

Films and videos are also available from a number of sources that provide information on the techniques of advertising as well. Students can do homework assignments watching TV for particular ads, doing some critical analysis of their messages. Critiquing advertising messages can help viewers feel less overwhelmed by the peer pressures that their kids bring home from school. Helping parents in adult classes learn about coping with advertising helps to get at some of the underlying social and economic issues as well.

Consumer information is important because it relates so much to the ordinary everyday experiences of learners. All of us are consumers at one time or another, and sooner or later anything and everything has the potential to be a consumer problem. The vehicle of consumer education can be used to teach literacy. It's relevant, it's timely. Research shows that if the content is relevant, the development of literacy skills takes place much more readily; people can see a *why* for their learning to read.

The Reluctant Learner: Reasons for Nonparticipation and Dropout Among B.C. Adults

Audrey M. Thomas

Victoria, B.C.

This workshop presented the findings of a recent research project whose aim was to explore reasons for nonparticipation in Adult Basic Literacy (ABL) programs and reasons for dropout from such programs in British Columbia. During the project, literature was reviewed, opinions were sought from Adult Basic Education (ABE) professionals and other helping professionals, seven literacy classes were visited to discuss issues with the participants, 66 adults from ages 17 to 59 years were personally interviewed in several different locations in the province, and two telephone surveys provided a combined interview sample of another 56 adults.

Very little research has been done on these topics in Canada. Much of the literature is United States based and fairly recent. The distinctive characteristics of the ABL target population often mean that the usual research approaches do not work. Studies on participation have looked at motivation, deterrents or barriers, and most recently at the phenomenon of avoidance or resistance. Much of the research has produced typologies of the target population. Researchers have stressed that the low-literate population should not be regarded as a homogeneous mass. Distinct subgroups exist, and it is important to keep them in mind when planning outreach strategies as well as when developing instructional strategies.

Among avoiders or resisters, the evidence suggests that low perceived need and negative attitudes towards school prevail. These people have their own value systems and are not necessarily against learning per se, but they are not aware of how ABL programs differ from their past experiences and thus have some erroneous notions. They are often quite talented in other ways.

Barriers to participate appear to be predominantly related to economic causes—job-related issues and costs are uppermost. Among dropouts, work and family-related reasons appear to dominate as causes for withdrawal.

Much of the research on program attrition has produced contradictory and inconclusive findings. This area of research is beset by problems of definition and

the heterogeneity of the ABL population. The "dropouts" or withdrawals in this study could just as easily be called "dropins" as many of them had a history of returning to ABL. In a telephone survey of one program, the reasons for withdrawal were non-program related and over 80 percent of those contacted said they would go back to the program if conditions were right. This positive attitude towards ABE programs among dropouts has been noted in some US research studies as well. The intentions to return to programs have implications for recruitment and waiting lists.

Major Findings

1. A recruitment thrust with a single message is unlikely to reach the bulk of nonparticipants any more than a single program delivery approach or any one instructional strategy can be applied to all adult participants.
2. People in this target population have often experienced chaotic lives. It is only when everything falls into place and the necessary supports are available that there is a reasonable chance of adults succeeding in their goals. If supports are not in place, the less motivated and curiosity-seekers soon drop out.
3. The main means of hearing about ABL programs is word of mouth. Door-to-door advertising and brochures for children to take home from school have worked in school district programs.
4. Recruitment strategies have been accompanied by the provision of a wide range of programs offering flexible schedules in accessible locations. Successful recruitment strategies may add to waiting lists and increased frustration on the part of would-be learners.
5. Many adults require bridging opportunities such as one-to-one tutoring or work in a learning centre with individual help before enrolling in regular college ABE classes. These programs show adults that they can learn and build up their self-esteem and confidence. Programs with a strong life skills component combined with academic skills are often necessary before a person can go on to academic literacy classes or vocational training.

6. Adult learners stressed the importance of peer counselling and tutoring and requested more help with transitions from one program to another. Such strategies are important in both recruitment and retention of learners. Some short training programs may be required and need to be developed for such helpers.
7. There needs to be more sensitivity training and awareness of the issues faced by low-literate adults among front-line institutional and government workers.
8. There has to be better provision of diagnostic services and counselling for learning disabled adults. These adults form an important subgroup within the target population. Specialized tutor-training will be necessary if tutorial programs are to help these people. Learning disabled adults also require the use of alternative instructional techniques and aids to help them learn in the way best suited to their learning styles.
9. Many low-literate adults are realistic; they know that it will be a long haul to obtain any kind of credential. They also know that the job opportunities are very limited in many of their communities. They need jobs or trades training which do not demand inflated credentials. It takes an extremely determined and courageous person to continue in ABE, given current circumstances.
10. Learners enjoy coming to ABL programs. The experience is often very different from what they had imagined. They enjoy learning at their own pace, but some need extra help and others need more stimulation in the self-paced classroom. Group and social interaction should not be ignored. Learning assistants, aides, or tutors may be needed to help the instructor. Some learners need longer than others to reach their goals. Timetabling should be flexible to allow learners the time required in order to succeed. Learners need to see that progress is being made.
11. Follow-up of persons who withdraw from classes should be conducted by someone on behalf of the program. The reasons for withdrawal are then documented. The learner also knows that someone cares and is more motivated to return when circumstances change.
12. More research and discussion is needed on a range of issues related to the adult low-literate population in British Columbia. For example, discussions are required on terms such as "success" and "attrition" in ABL programs. The fact that a "dropout" participated at all could be interpreted as a success, and may hold hope for the future. Is not that part of what lifelong learning is all about?

Note: This project was cost-shared between the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat, Ottawa.

Evaluation of ABL/ABE and Workplace Literacy Programs

Kathryn Barker Chang

Medicine Hat College

Formal program evaluation is often feared or avoided. Certainly, few evaluations have been conducted on Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in Alberta. There is a growing need for accountability and program improvement, but little definitive information on which to base decisions exists. In this context, the process of formal program evaluation presents a number of challenges.

The Resistance to Overcome

Many educators are resistant to formal evaluations. Some feel that they are trained purveyors of information, and that program evaluation requires an administrative skill of which they have insufficient knowledge and with which they are inexperienced, i.e., someone else should be the evaluator. Some say that they are swamped with planning and instructional duties, i.e., there just isn't enough time to do everything! Others feel that program evaluation calls their professional integrity into question, i.e., trained educators can simply be expected to deliver results. A few have been heard to say that the concept of accountability cannot or should not be applied in education. Many feel threatened by evaluation, fearing some sort of negative consequences.

The first challenge is to address the pervasive negativity toward the concept of formal program evaluation.

What the Term Means

The second challenge is to be able to define and explain evaluation in a user-friendly way.

It might be helpful to substitute the words "program review" or "examination" for evaluation; however, the real solution lies in knowledge rather than avoidance.

To evaluate means to determine the value of something. The assigning of value implies judgment and subjectivity, and for this reason the concept of evaluation is often controversial. At its most neutral, the process of evaluation involves objective description, comparison and judgment of individuals, programs or products. Evaluation becomes either positive or negative depending on the perceived purpose of the process; ideally, the evaluation process is undertaken to

assist positively in making decisions. Decision makers rely on objective evaluation in order to maintain, improve or terminate programs.

For practical purposes, evaluation may be defined as a process involving description and measurement, comparison and judgment (Brack & Moss, 1984). In order to examine an educational program, it must be described in observable terms. Measurement, the process of determining status and amount, provides the most observable statements about a program and makes description more concrete and usable. A program, once described, can either be compared to other such programs in relative terms or to standards of acceptability and excellence in absolute terms. Comparison leads to judgment about the value of the program, whether it is as good as other such programs, or at all acceptable. It is the judgment process that is the most threatening, but the most critical to decision making. The key factor in judgment is **who** is making the judgment; the judges and the stakeholders are determined by the purpose of the evaluation.

From the various definitions of evaluation have come models which differ significantly. According to Brack and Moss (1984), five common types are: objective-based, experimental, adversarial, decision centered, and responsive.

A third challenge is to choose the appropriate model or develop a new one.

The Purpose of Evaluation

In the literature of evaluation, there are a number of stated purposes for formal program evaluation. Speaking technically, systematic formal evaluation provides a baseline of information about a program, system or product; it can be responsive to data requirements as they emerge (Stufflebeam, 1971). To this end, evaluation should be a cyclic, continuous process. According to Stake (1967), records which document causes and effects, the match between intent and accomplishment, should be maintained and these records should be kept to promote action, not obstruct it. Ultimately, the evaluator wishes to communicate: to inform, educate, inspire, arouse, or otherwise produce a beneficial impact upon appropriate people (Smith & St. John, 1985).

Speaking practically, evaluation is performed in the service of decision making; therefore, it should provide information which is useful to decision makers. The

decision makers, in the context of adult basic education, are the potential students, actual students, instructors and tutors, program administrators, individuals in support services, funders, and/or legislators. Each has a different purpose for supporting or conducting a formal program evaluation.

The fourth challenge is to determine and articulate purpose statements upon which a formal ABE program evaluation might or should be based.

Different Times, Different Types

Evaluation purpose is largely related to timing, i.e., before a program starts, while it is in operation, or at the end of a program cycle. According to Stufflebeam (1971), different types of evaluation are conducted for making different types of decision, such as planning, structuring, implementing, and recycling decision.

A fifth challenge is to decide which decision-making situations can and should appropriately be addressed.

According to purpose and timing, evaluation is typically classified as either formative or summative, i.e., used to make plans and modifications while a program is being implemented or used to make conclusive judgments about outcomes of a program.

Gathering Information

A great deal of information must be gathered, in a variety of ways, during all phases of a program cycle in order to conduct a program evaluation. There are a large number and variety of sources of information, and there are an equally large number and variety of methods of gathering data (Smith & St. John, 1985).

A sixth challenge is to determine the most appropriate tools for data gathering related to each source and method.

The purpose of evaluation is essentially to make program decisions relative to the objectives of some or all of the relevant decision makers. What to evaluate, therefore, is the measure by which each decision maker may judge the program to be successful, i.e., what they want out of the program.

The Actual Process

The actual evaluation is a process of describing, comparing and judging. In order to examine an educational program, it must be described in observable terms. Measurement, the process of determining status and amount, provides the most observable statements about a program and makes description more concrete and usable.

The first step in program evaluation is an objective description of what currently exists with regard to objectives, students, staff, and facilities. Although all of this information may not be required, a program description includes: a statement of purpose; specific details of location, time frames, numbers of students, staff, sponsorship; program objectives; a description of the client population; the major learning objectives of the program; the instructional objectives; a description of the instructional staff; a description of program staff functions; a description of administrative support requirements; the financial plan; and planning documents.

The seventh challenge is to acquire and organize this information.

A second description of the ideal standards of acceptance and/or excellence is also needed. Internal standards or program objectives are relative to the learners and sponsors of the particular program and/or to those in other programs. External standards or principles of good practice are the result of experimentation, consultation and consensus by experts and all stakeholders in the field.

An eighth and major challenge is to create standards of excellence or principles of good practice for an ABE program.

The second step is comparison of the real or current description to either the relative or absolute standards. In the act of comparison, one is looking for discrepancies between observations about the program and the standards or objectives for that program. The discrepancy information becomes feedback for the program organizers, either in the formative sense of correcting weaknesses or in the summative sense to pass judgment on a program. The third step is judgment; rational judgment in educational evaluation is a decision as to how much to pay attention to the relative and/or absolute standards that have been set in deciding whether or not to take some administrative action (Stake, 1967).

References

- Brack, R.E., & Moss, G.M. (1984). Program evaluation. In D. Blackburn (Ed.), *Extension handbook*. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph.
- Smith, N., & St. John, M. (1985). *Overview of alternative evaluation methods*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Lab, Research on Evaluation Programs.
- Stake, R.E. (1967). The countenance of educational evaluation. In *Educational evaluation: Theory and practice frameworks for planning evaluation studies*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Stufflebeam, D.L. (1971). *Educational evaluation and decision making*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Journeys: How Learners and Community Members Run Their Program

Avril Chartrand and Kathleen Walsh

Literacy Workers' Alliance of Manitoba

Introduction

My name is Avril Chartrand. I started going to school in 1985. I heard about it by an announcement at church. They said that there were classes on Elgin Avenue. I was excited because they said it was from grade one up, so I asked someone "Did I hear right that they said its from grade one up?" I went there but didn't go in because I was too nervous. The third time that I came back I went in and started right away.

I only went to school for grade one. They classified me as a slow learner; I was put into an ungraded school. I felt humiliated, so I stopped going to school. When I was 10 I was sent to the Manitoba School, and there I worked in the kitchen and on the wards making beds and so on. When I was 17 I got out. I was on drugs for over 10 years, and one day I just had enough and I quit. This year it's 10 years. I wanted to get my mind back on track and cleared up.

Kathleen

Board Development

As the program grew from 1984-1988 so did the responsibilities. When it was small, teachers did recruitment, secretarial work, janitorial work, bookkeeping, financial proposals and fundraising. But the responsibilities grew, and we found that we needed support, involvement of others to help with the work, and the ideas of others. For instance, one day a student suggested that we move the location of the coffee pot to facilitate the traffic flow of students and to open up more convenient study space. We tried it, and it worked. So we recognized that many heads are better than a few.

As a program, we were ineligible to apply independently for funding. If the program had a board of directors and became incorporated, then we could apply independently to foundations.

So the two teachers held a meeting with the students and asked them if they would be interested in participating in such a board. Because the students liked the program, they wanted to be more involved. In addition they saw how hard the teachers were working and they wanted to share that.

So, at the March 1988 Learners' Conference, our program requested that we be offered a two-day introductory board development session. Avril can tell something about that session.

Avril

Brian Orvis, who is now our second teacher, gave the session. He made it interesting. That's one of the reasons I wanted to join. Brian asked those who were interested in being involved in the board to stand up. The whole room of 18 people stood up.

Kathleen

Over the next three months we had meetings every two weeks to get to know each other, do long-range planning, form committees, and to learn about school finances. In school we continued to have mock practice meetings. Finally in June, just before our incorporation, we elected an executive, because by then we knew each other well and we knew who'd be best at each job.

Now, I'd like to talk about some of the responsibilities that the board became involved in, what they learned, and how doing that work helped the program.

Personnel Committee

One of the first committees we established was the personnel committee, since the second teacher, a Native woman, was leaving in June. I gave the committee a list of questions that employers often asked in an interview situation. The group got together at one student's house and brainstormed the questions they would like to ask. These questions were divided among three students who sat on the interviewing committee with me. After all, they were the ones who were going to be taught by the person chosen, so it made sense that they would know best with whom they'd be most comfortable. Their input was very important.

Since that time, the personnel committee has interviewed and hired a bookkeeper, a janitor and a secretary. They ratified the employment of our Native childcare worker as well. This committee works so well now that they hired a secretary-receptionist over the summer while I was away. One of our board members had the idea of phoning the business schools and asking for the names of recent graduates. She gathered a lot of information, made new contacts and hired an excellent secretary to boot!

House-Finding Committee

In early 1989, Journeys received a grant to move from our cramped quarters in a house to a larger site where we could have expanded hours. I had a concern that I wanted the new site to be homey and comfortable, yet to be centrally located in the downtown area. I figured that the students should have input into the environment in which they'd be working, so we struck up a house-finding committee.

Avril

We went to a real estate agent to help us find a new site. The site was a former clinic with little offices. We asked the owner to knock down some walls to make one big room and three medium rooms; the rest we left as small rooms. We had the bathroom expanded to make it large enough for a wheelchair.

Next, we picked out wall-to-wall carpet and tile for our big room. The School Division gave us desks, chairs and some cupboards. We had furniture made at cost, covered in the colors we wanted. We bought some pictures for the walls, and ordered tables, bookshelves and children's play equipment for our child care, and moveable blackboards. We also had to buy a television, VCR, computers, printers, clocks, a radio, a microwave, a small refrigerator and a photocopier.

I learned the value of things and their costs. I learned to get the best buy for my money. Now when I go shopping I weigh things more. Instead of buying a small jar of coffee, now I'll buy a bigger jar at a better cost.

Kathleen

When we moved in, the place was set up exactly the way we needed it. Also, members of the board helped pack books, unpack books, put up curtains, wash desks, arrange supplies, etc.

We needed the computers and printers to be in place for our book publishing committee. In 1986 we'd published our first book. Students had written stories and had drawn pictures to go with them, but the School Division had printed it in very small print. We decided that we could produce a better book if we had control of the book size, print size and style, and spaces between lines.

Since that first book we've published four others. These are available at a cost of \$5.00 each. Avril has been on the book publishing committee from the beginning. Avril what have you learned?

Avril

I have learned how to lay out stories, how to choose themes, how to pick a picture for the cover, and how to edit and proofread stories.

Kathleen Ear Therapy

We've had a program called Tomatis Ear Therapy in our school for a year now. It helps students who've had speech impairments, hyperactivity, dyslexia, emotional blocks, and angry reactions. It uses an electronic ear to filter Mozart's music at different frequencies through headphones with bone conductors.

It starts with low frequencies and gradually, as the human ear becomes accustomed, the frequencies become higher and squeakier. This high music energizes the body and releases stress that is built up in any of the body's organs that are attached to the spine. The electronic ear also controls the delay of music that goes through each of the headphones. In this way, it changes the dominance to the right ear for dyslexic students.

Students participate in the listening program for two hours a day for 10 days, and then they have a six-week break. During this time they go to the Centre for Audiopsychophonology.

I also use Neurolinguistic Programming with spelling to teach students how to photograph information and improve their visual recall. It has also been helpful for students who have learning blocks.

Learners' Conference Committee

Manitoba has had five learners' conferences. For the past two years students from Journeys have helped to host the Learners' Conference. This has been spearheaded by the board of directors of Journeys past president, executive and board members. Last year they recruited approximately 20 students to help them.

Avril Registration

We set up 300 booklets for the conference. We included information on the upcoming book *Voyage*, scratch pads, pens, buttons and information on the play that the students would be seeing on Saturday. We prepared nametags and color coded them for the workshop students were registered in. We set up a registration table and registered people as they arrived. We tried to make them comfortable.

Entertainment

On Friday night for the out-of-town students we had arranged to take them on some outings. One group

went to the planetarium and another group went to the IMAX theatre. On Saturday night we hosted a dry social. Tables were set up around the outside of the room and people danced in the middle. Five minutes after the sound man had set up, everyone was dancing. At the tables people sat and chatted, drank coffee and pop and ate fruit.

Kathleen

Since the Board has been incorporated, they've had the four board development sessions to learn about roles, duties of committees, orientation of new members, and to talk about responsibilities. In addition, some long-range plans have been made at these sessions.

Avril, would you please comment on how being on the board has helped you to develop as a person.

Avril

I can speak more clearly, I'm more confident, and I'm less shy. I've changed a lot in the shyness department. It took me three years to get really comfortable in the school.

Kathleen

When problems in school came up, how did you solve them?

Avril

We had a problem about smoking in the school. So we took a poll to find out how many people wanted smoking outside for the warm weather (6 months). The majority won.

Kathleen

When does the board get elected?

Avril

At the annual general meeting in April or May one half of the board can get elected. Half of the board serve for one-year terms and half for two-year terms. We have a nominating committee, and no one may nominate himself or herself.

Our membership fee is \$1.00 for students and \$5.00 for nonstudents. You have to be a paid-up member in order to vote.

Kathleen

How do you choose what committees people are on?

Avril

At the beginning, people just volunteered. Now the president asks people who she thinks would be good on the committee to get the job done. Even people who aren't on the board can be on a committee.

Kathleen

How do students know about the board?

Avril

The board members tell the students the president will be coming twice a month to speak with students. Our board meetings are held every second Monday of the month from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Journeys. At the beginning, some of our meetings lasted for five hours, but now they're down to about three hours.

Kathleen

As the coordinator and founder, I sometimes have an idea that may be good for the school, and I'll run it by the board to see what their thoughts on it may be.

For instance, I knew about a listening program that has been successfully used by the School Division with Special Ed. classes and has proven to be extremely effective with those who have speech difficulties, reversals, hearing loss or hearing blocks. I talked to the board and they seemed interested, but had questions. So I invited Dr. Leonne Valorg in to explain the program. The board voted for it and despite some opposition to it, we've seen a complete turn-around.

Avril, why do you think a board is important?

Avril

It shares responsibility and shows you it's your school as well as the teachers'. It helps us to grow in a lot of areas.

Conference Closing Synthesizer's Report

Gordon Selman

University of British Columbia

Well, the time has come to attempt the impossible. I am charged with responsibility for summing something of the experience we have shared at this conference. With all the many subsessions and all the opportunities we have had for exchanges outside of the sessions, in a way each of us has created his/her own conference experience. I hope you recognize at least some elements of what follows as meaningful and significant parts of the conference you created for yourself.

At the outset I wish to express my great pleasure in being part of these proceedings. It has been a fine experience, and in great company. I have learned a lot from it, and I am most grateful for the opportunity to share it with you all.

I would like to reflect on our experience together under six headings.

The Conference

C.S. Lewis has said, "To interest is the first duty of art." I think we might say the same of conferences. To interest is their first duty. To my mind, and that of many others I have talked to, this has been a richly rewarding experience:

- We have had exceptionally fine plenary sessions and speakers.
- We have learned much from workshop leaders and resource persons.
- We have learned a great deal from each other. I saw that happening over and over in the workshops.

As a personal comment, I would like to say that I have seen many instances of brilliant teaching and workshop leadership at this conference—most of it from women, I have to say.

There has been an amazing response to this conference. I am told there have been 801 registrations. This is at the same time:

- a tribute to the efforts of the organizers, and
- a deeply impressive manifestation of what is going on in this underfinanced, undersupported, largely unheralded, but vibrant field of educational activity.

Henry James once commented that the way to judge a work of fiction is by the amount of "felt life" it contained. If one judges the field of literacy education in Alberta and Canada by the felt life reflected in this conference, there are grounds for wonder and for confidence. To quote George Kennan, "One feels the heat of a brightly burning flame."

I have had an opportunity overnight to review the stated purposes of this conference

- to bring us together,
- to focus public and political attention on this field,
- to share experience, ideas and enthusiasm, and
- to identify needed next steps and make concrete plans.

All of these goals have clearly been met, with the possible exception of the last. We have said much about the needs of the future, but "concrete plans?" Not that I know of. But we go on in hope, and with commitment to the importance of the task.

The Topic: Literacy Education and the International Literacy Year

The literature of the field is replete with many and varied commentaries as to what literacy is and what it means in the lives of people and societies. We are safe in saying that it is a relative measure, rather than an absolute one. Its definition must be worked out in the light of the society in which it is set. It has been described as a set of "moving goalposts," and as a goal which is redefined as the host society evolves.

The Director-General of UNESCO has described the objectives of this International Literacy Year as:

- increasing action by the governments of member states,
- increasing public awareness,
- increasing popular participation,
- increasing international cooperation,
- using the year for launching a Plan of Action for the eradication of illiteracy by the Year 2000.

Our concern must be whether International Literacy Year, now close to over, will in fact lead on to substantial achievement in the Literacy Decade ahead.

The Educators

We have had a truly impressive array of educators at this conference who are involved in literacy activity—administrators, teachers, tutors, curriculum writers, program planners, researchers. They include volunteers, part-time employed, and full-time career specialists. One is heartened to see an increasing coming together of literacy specialists, social movement activists, ESL specialists, community development workers, and more. In short, the number and variety of persons here who are interested in this field is tremendously encouraging.

There has been some comment about the preponderance of women at this conference. It is indeed very noticeable. Mr. Gogo, at the opening session, made mention of this fact and paid welcome tribute to the large number of volunteers in this field. I was uncomfortable, however, with his subsequent comments about this. He attributed the strong presence of women in the field to "their maternal instinct." Was it? There may be something to that; I'm not sure. On the other hand, it may equally be the case that many women are in these volunteer and part-time jobs not out of choice, but because the field of literacy education is so underfunded and underdeveloped that tasks which should be paid positions—full and part time—are simply not available on that basis.

A further point which has come out in many ways at this conference—in the sessions and between them—is the clear lack of commitment to literacy education on the part of funding sources and educational institutions. I will return to this under the heading of public policy, but here I wish to note the devastating effect on the lives and income of workers in this field.

Finally under this heading I wish to point out the amazing flowering—or more accurately, creative development—of the methodology of the field of literacy education, as reflected especially in the workshops of this conference. It is truly impressive; there is some brilliant work being done. I wish I had time to do more than simply recognize this fact in these general terms.

The Learners

We have heard a lot about learners and about working with learners at the conference. One hardly knows how to summarize. We have had considerable discussion of learners sharing in decisions about the programs in which they are taking part. We know that women are in the majority in the illiteracy picture in this country, and among literacy learners. We know that 76% of illiterate people in Canada were born in this country. We have heard reference to immigrants and their needs, but should not lose sight of the fact

that the vast majority of literacy learners, and of potential literacy learners, are born in this country.

We are beginning to recognize that no one approach will attract learners to literacy learning and that no one type of education and assistance with learning will do the job. This must be a multifaceted approach, with many types of service provided.

Many believe that poverty is the root cause of illiteracy in our country and that if there isn't the will to tackle that problem, we at least must acknowledge its impact on literacy learners and be ready to meet (as far as possible) a variety of other needs—day care has perhaps been named most frequently—if we are going to make it possible for literacy learners to keep at it. In this connection it is relevant to note that 59% of Canadian adults who are poor are women.

We have heard eloquent reminders of the dignity of literacy learners and the demand for respect which they rightly insist upon. We have been reminded of the links between literacy and the spirituality of people, and of how much all of us can learn from indigenous ways of life.

Public Policy and Literacy

At least in our plenary sessions, we have perhaps heard more about this topic than any other. That we are in desperately bad shape in this area was known to all of us before we came. Our plenary speakers have addressed this matter in factual, emotional and dramatic terms. To those of us who are committed to the importance of this work, the statements of our speakers rang true.

Jonathan Kozol asserted that lack of literacy on the scale we have it cannot be looked upon as "an error," a case of people "slipping through the cracks," but rather must be seen as a result of what he termed "poverty, oppression and injustice." He summed up by describing the present situation as "a grave betrayal of our ideals." He ended by wishing literacy workers many good things, significantly including "survival."

Lest we think of Kozol's tales of American society as being remote from Canadian experience, we turn to Peter Calamai. From him we heard of the terrible Statistics Canada picture of illiteracy in Canada as being largely ignored by government, the press and the general public—"the great disappearing horror story," he termed it. He stated that the picture of illiteracy in Canada is "an embarrassment" to governments, and declared that in this area, "governments have failed the people." Concerning Alberta, he pointed out that to meet the needs of 478,000 adults who can't handle everyday reading tasks, there are 4,000 places in programs. Most basic of all, he pointed out that established

authorities choose to see the problem as a personal one, carrying a stigma for the individuals affected, when it should rightly be seen as a "systematic" one, a result of the functioning of our society as a whole.

In thinking about this I was reminded of a statement I came across recently in the submission by the United Church of Canada to the MacDonald Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects. I am not a member of that church, although I respect its efforts over the decades to fight for basic human values.

The needs of the poor must take priority over the wants of the rich; the freedom of the dominated must take priority over the liberty of the powerful; and the participation of marginalized groups must take priority over the preservation of an order that excludes them.

Is that idealism? Perhaps it is. If it is, it is an idealism I respect. What we do know is that it is a view which is a far cry from that of a federal government which:

- insists upon seeing literacy in economic and productivity terms,
- has reduced its commitment to ESL,
- for all its ringing statements made at the international level, has no policy of literacy for all, and
- as Peter Calamai pointed out, will from its GST on reading materials alone tax back many times more in a year than it is putting into its literacy work.

At the provincial level, to bring this closer to home, it can only be said that in spite of the high personal regard in which many hold the Minister and some of the senior people in his Ministry, and in spite of what is being accomplished by dint of the efforts of many devoted professional persons and many volunteers, the state of policy towards and financial support of literacy activities is abysmal. I make this latter judgment not as a visitor to your province, but as a report on many opinions I have heard expressed here.

The Spirit and the Purpose of Literacy Education

Among other things, this takes us back to Freire and our opening session, to his ideas of literacy as a means

of empowerment and as a means of social transformation. I am impressed by what Freire and Arturo at our opening session had to say about love as a basis for this work. I respect that, but it takes me back to one of the books which has had the most profound effect on my own development, Herbert Muller's *The Uses of the Past*. Muller argued that love of one's fellow human being is too much to expect of humankind (a fact which he claims is demonstrated in history) and that what we should aim for is not love, which is beyond most of us, but tolerance. We may not love our fellow human beings, but perhaps we can learn to let them live their lives according to their lights. I think I feel the same way about Freire's call for us to respond to love. I am more inclined to feel that what we must rely on is rather respect and concern. I leave that to you.

R.H. Tawney, the famous British scholar and social activist, carried this a step further. Speaking of working class people who were pursuing their education through the Workers' Educational Association in Britain, he said that those who were furthering their education in that way were seeking it "not in order that they become something else, but because of what they are."

Quite a lot of discouragement has been expressed at this conference. And there are reasons for feeling that way. I guess at this time, at the beginning of the Literacy Decade, we have to summon up our spirits—and take on Goliath—based on our ideals, and in the name of the people with whom we are working. There is a battle to be won. John Grierson, the first Director of the National Film Board of Canada, said at the end of World War II that through the Film Board he was trying "to make peace as exciting as war." Jonathan Kozol told us a couple of days ago, referring to the literacy struggle, "That would be a battle worth winning." And finally, I am frequently drawn back to the lines of John Milton:

Yet much remains to conquer still: peace
Hath her victories no less renowned than war.

I extend my greetings and best wishes to all of you.

Appendix A

Keynote Speakers

Peter Calamai

In 1987, Canadian journalist Peter Calamai directed a six-month study of illiteracy in Canada for Southam newspapers. This study, entitled **Broken Words**, is the first wide-scale measurement of illiteracy among Canadian adults. The resulting 40-part series of articles by Calamai appeared in more than two dozen newspapers coast to coast. More than 15,000 copies of a booklet based on the series have been distributed. Education and business groups in Canada and the United States honoured the literacy series with several awards, including co-winner of the 1987 Michener Award in Canada given to news organizations for meritorious public service, and UNESCO gave an honorary mention to Southam in its annual literacy awards.

Mike Fox

Mike Fox is Executive Director of Push Literacy Action Now (PLAN, Inc.), a community-based adult literacy program in Washington, DC. Fox has managed the transition of PLAN from a one-on-one tutoring program using structured curriculum to a learner-oriented program based on small group classes. He is an outspoken proponent of alternative strategies and directions for adult literacy. Under his direction PLAN has emerged as a model program demonstrating innovative and successful activities in such areas as workplace literacy, family literacy, readability and the rights of low-literate people.

Paulo Freire

Since the appearance of his **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (1972) and **Education for Critical Consciousness** (1974), Paulo Freire's contributions to adult literacy have been recognized outside his native country by bodies such as Harvard University and UNESCO. In Brazil he served as General Coordinator of the National Plan for Adult Literacy, Professor of Education, Catholic University of São Paulo, and is presently Minister of Education for the city of São Paulo.

Jonathan Kozol

In 1964, Jonathan Kozol moved from Harvard Square into a poor black neighborhood of Boston and became a grade four teacher in the Boston public schools. He has devoted over 25 years to issues of education and social justice in America and, in these years, has published seven books. In 1979 Kozol turned his focus to adult literacy, and in 1980 he was asked by the Cleveland Public Library to design a literacy plan for the great American cities. The study won broad-based support and led to the five-year effort that produced **Illiterate America**.

Frank Ogden

With the world's knowledge base doubling approximately every 20 months, the future is coming quickly. Change may well be the only constant in the Information Age, and maintaining flexibility will be essential for survival. Frank Ogden outlines what the electronic and information revolutions will bring us over the next few decades. Audiences praise him, not for a portrait of the future, but because "he shakes people up and gets us thinking about the future."

Appendix B

Conference Organizing Committee

Conference Chairperson

Patrick Fahy, PhD
Alberta Vocational Centre
Edmonton

Finance

Douglas Bates
Alberta Vocational Centre
Edmonton

Technical Support

Lyle Emmott
ACCESS Network

Alberta Association For Adult Literacy (AAAL) Representative

Wenda Housego
AAAL

Operations

Carol Humphries
EACER, Edmonton's Further Education Council

Post-Conference

Publications and Activities

Abram G. Konrad, PhD
University of Alberta

Programs

Vicki Nicholson
Alberta Vocational Centre
Edmonton

Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) Representative

Judy Steward
ATESL

Appendix C

Schedule at a Glance

Tuesday, October 9 //

- 3:00 - 10:00 p.m. Registration
- 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. Conference Opening
Hon. Joyce Fairbairn
Gordon Selman,
Conference Synthesizer
- Keynote Address: Paulo Freire (videotaped interview)
- Panel Discussion: Carlos Torres (moderator),
Mike Fox, Lorna Bell,
Faith Fernald, Arturo Lizardi

Wednesday, October 10

- 7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast
- 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. General Session
- Greetings: Her Worship Jan Reimer, Mayor,
City of Edmonton
- Keynote Address: Jonathan Kozol
- 10:30 - 12:00 Sessions
- 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Sessions
- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Sessions
- 7:30 p.m. Medieval Feast/Banquet
(tickets: \$25/person)

Thursday, October 11

- 7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast
- 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. General Session:

- Greetings: Janet Longmate, Movement
for Canadian Literacy
- Special Address: Hon. John Gogo, Minister, Alberta
Advanced Education
- Keynote Address: Peter Calamai
- 10:30 - 12:00 Sessions
- 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Sessions
- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Sessions
- 6:00 p.m. An evening of choice
(See back of registration)

Friday, October 12

- 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. AAAL* Annual General Meeting
and breakfast
- ATESL** Annual General Meeting
and breakfast
- Round-table Breakfast Sessions
- 10:00 - 12:00 Closing Session:
- Special Address: Right Honourable Ramon J.
Hnatyshyn, Governor
General, Canada
- Keynote Address: Frank Ogden
- Conference Closing: Hon. Joyce Fairbairn
Gordon Selman,
Conference Synthesizer

* Alberta Association of Adult Literacy

** Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language

Appendix D

Conference Program

Topic: Liberation in community

Presenter: LIZARDI, ARTURO ORNELAS

This seminar will introduce a project in popular education with the peasants in the rural areas of Tepoztlan, Morelos, Mexico. It will present the experiences, the methodologies, and the theories which served as reference points for the work and to share successes and mistakes, and reflect on the future.

Topic: Consumer talk: Materials for development of literacy skills in a consumer context

Presenters: JENKINS, BETH
BARON, GAIL

"Consumer Talk" speaks to an audience that does not usually "hear" the written word. This series of publications was developed especially for basic readers—adults who do not read routinely for work or pleasure, and who have a difficult time with everyday reading. The issues in this series explore a variety of common consumer activities, including buying a used car, comparative shopping and renting a place to live.

The presenters will discuss the history of "Consumer Talk," including its development process, and ways in which the publications have been used. They will also discuss the availability of teaching notes and Department services which can help educators to use consumer education as a practical and meaningful context for development of literacy skills. There will be an opportunity for participants to ask questions, share experiences and ideas, and provide feedback on the use of the publications.

Topic: Resources from the National Film Board for teaching English as a Second Language

Presenter: SLAVIK, HOLLY

Excerpts from the best NFB films for ESL plus suggestions for class activities based on these films. An updated ESL film resource/activities list will be available.

Topic: Teaching techniques for ESL

Presenter: STEWARD, JUDY
PORTER, JOAN

An 18-part video series designed to assist ESL instructors. Joan Porter and Judy Stewart will be on hand to answer questions and give detailed information on the

techniques used in the videos, "Teaching Techniques for English as a Second Language." Each video is 5-6 minutes long. Both Joan and Judy acted as instructors and consultants for these productions.

Topic: The Public library—A partner in literacy

Presenters: WALKER, CAROLYN
MacKINNON, JANET

By its very nature the public library has always felt a kinship for literacy and ESL activities. It is the aim of the public library to provide library services to adult new learners which are equivalent to services offered to other library users.

The public library acts as an information and referral centre for literacy and ESL services. As part of its reference service the library can distribute literature, display posters and exhibit materials about literacy and literacy services. Many potential adult new learners have been referred to literacy programs by library staff. The library also offers a neutral space where volunteer tutors and students can meet.

Topic: Life concerns education: A comparison of the approaches of Paulo Freire, newstart life skills, adult performance level and career education

Presenter: LEONARD, JAMES C.

This session will review a number of recurring philosophical issues as a means of establishing perspective. Following will be an examination of the theoretical assumptions and major methodologies associated with dominant approaches to Life Concerns Education. As part of the theoretical assumption examination the Aims, Social Change Theories, Learning Theories, Conceptions of Learners, Conceptions of Instruction and Conceptions of Evaluation will be explored. Suggestions will be offered for synthesizing these approaches into a reconceived model of adult education which focuses on life concerns.

Topic: Latin American literacy partnership project

Presenters: ASTETE, MARIA
URETA, CECILIA
SCHMUCK, SARAH
ANDAUR, IVONNE

The Latin American Partnership began in September 1989. Project cooperators are the Calgary Catholic School Board, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Escuela Latino-Americana de los Sábados and the Secretary of State. It was over one year in the planning.

This partnership has been designed to help women overcome the difficulties of adjusting to a new society and with the acquisition of English literacy skills. It accommodates preschoolers of those women accepted in the program. Statistics concerning school children whose first language is not English show that the lack of adequate English has put these students at risk.

This project proposes to address the problem of illiteracy from a remedial (adult students) and from a preventative (preschoolers) focus.

The instructors for the adults' and children's classes will present for each of their programs:

- The research foundations and precedents for the project,
- The development and organization of the project,
- The curriculum and materials developed for the project,
- The teaching strategies used in the project,
- The assessment strategies used in the project,
- The effective use of the bilingual approach,
- The teaching of the language, bridging oral to written.

Topic: The development of the adult literacy movement in Canada

Presenter: THOMAS, AUDREY M.

The growth of the literacy movement in Canada has resulted from the combination of international, national, provincial and local influences. The roles of different levels of government, the media, business and labor will be highlighted. Until the late 1980s, however, literacy was very much a grassroots movement in which the voluntary sector and community agencies played major roles. The advocacy efforts of this nongovernmental sector will be examined. Future scenarios may also be discussed.

Topic: Prepackaged formats or participatory approaches? Relevant options and strategies for adult literacy practitioners

Presenters: COLLINS, DR. MICHAEL
HANSON, JODY

Questions will be raised about how our educational practice is shaped by prepackaged curriculum. In particular it will examine how competency-based formats, and their manifestation in computer assisted instruction, manage to deskill rather than to empower teachers as well as learners (Collins, 1984/85/87). Participatory approaches to literacy (Fingeret, 1989), which allow learners and teachers a genuine stake in creating the learning process, are critically assessed as the most relevant alternative to standardized prepackaged formats. Some alternative orientations (Hanson, 1990) will be identified as a means for countering the most harmful effects of prepackaging in contexts which have already embraced a technocratic top-down approach to curriculum implementation. There is a need for practitioners, especially, to question the efficacy of prevailing curriculum formats that satisfy immediate demands for directions on "how to" deploy quick-fix solutions. Instead, we should be prepared to take on more challenging and relevant alternatives.

Topic: What to expect when you have to teach Basic Ed. Math?

Presenter: HONG, LEONOR

Teaching math can be fun if one's students always understand concepts presented in class. As a math instructor, the presenter is often confronted with the problem very typical in a math class—the more one teaches, the less the student understands. The conclusion has been reached that in order to be a good math instructor, one's knowledge and skills in math will not suffice. A math teacher, if for no other reason than to remain sane, has to learn to expect problems, anticipate areas of difficulty for the learner, and finally, to become perceptive of the type of student he/she is dealing with at any one time.

The presenter will address related issues and share some of her teaching tips using the Basic Ed. Math Course (a CML Math Course) currently used at Alberta Vocational College, Calgary. Topics to be discussed will only include whole numbers, fractions, decimals, ratio and proportion, percent and introduction to algebra/consumer applications.

Topic: Meeting the needs of learning disabled students at university

Presenters: KOVACH, KAREN
VOSAHLO, MARION

An overview of the University of Alberta's Learning Disabled Student Program will be presented along with a description of the ways in which the program has been adapted to meet the needs of the students. Topics to be discussed include the characteristics of LD adults, LD student needs at the postsecondary level, structuring a program to meet student needs, background to the LD program, student eligibility and program access, program description, staff and facilities and general research results of the program's effectiveness to date.

Topic: Reading the environment: Signs of literacy

Presenter: RIGG, PAT

Adults who are just becoming literate in English are already reading—perhaps unconsciously—some of the signs in the environment, such as MEN/WOMEN; STOP; VISA, etc. This workshop demonstrates how adult students can gather and categorize examples of print they read in their environments, and how they can use these examples as the basis of writing their own environmental print.

Topic: Self-assessment of academic reading and writing proficiency: A look at its relationship to actual ESL competency and the influence of different factors upon the results

Presenter: BANKO, ROSALIE

This paper will discuss the relationship between self-report items addressing academic reading and writing proficiency and actual ESL competency of 245 university students whose first language is not English. Secondly, it will look at the influence of the following factors on the results of both the self-assessment and proficiency measures: test anxiety, cultural self-concept, value of accurate judgement, academic field of study, number of years in an English-language academic institution, native language, age and sex.

Topic: Literacy for the blind and visually impaired

Presenters: GOETZ, DORIS
HIRSCH, BRADEN

The number of blind and visually impaired individuals seeking literacy training is increasing. Technology has made access and integration into educational settings a reality. This technology has provided the potential to work and live more independently, and as a result, the

need for literacy skills is ever-increasing. A recent survey conducted by the CNIB found that most literacy programs are not equipped or prepared to meet the needs of blind or visually impaired students. Of the 84 programs that returned surveys, only 2 had units designed to provide support to these students. Implications and recommendations of this survey will be discussed.

Topic: Perceptions of the roles of literacy tutors

Presenter: DEVINS, SUSAN

An important aspect of literacy is the relationship between learners and tutors. This presentation will discuss the results of a study which examined the perceptions of the roles of volunteer literacy tutors as identified by tutors and adult learners. A structured questionnaire was administered to 30 pairs (tutors and learners) involved in one-on-one tutoring programs in the Edmonton area. The questionnaire included a demographic section, a section looking at the different definitions of literacy and a section on the specific roles of tutors and learners within the tutoring sessions. From this session, the audience will have a better understanding of the dynamics of the tutor's role.

Topic: Literacy in the workplace: The Stelco experience

Presenters: STEYN, DINI
SALOPEK, MARGO
SHIPTON, AL

JET (Job Effectiveness Training) was launched at Stelco Steel, Edmonton Works in 1989/90 as a pilot project. The three presenters will discuss the curriculum, the birth of JET, the needs assessment at Stelco, the development process, the tailoring of JET to the needs of Stelco, company involvement, the outcome and future projection for JET.

Topic: Learning to learn

Presenter: DEMCHUK, HEATHER

This workshop will cover learning modes, the right/left brain theory, social learner vs. private learner, and memory techniques. The three exercises in the packages will tell the learner something about their own individual style.

Topic: Adult Education policy implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania: Some research findings

Presenters: TORRES, CARLOS
SCHUGURENSKY, DANIEL

This paper describes a comparative study of adult education policies in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania. Values, attitudes, aspirations and expectations of policy-makers, adult educators and adult learners are analyzed. Implications for program development are considered. Structures of communications and channels of participation are also explored. Findings suggest that a particular model of adult education is being implemented in each country. Discrepancies between public goals and actual reality, between skill and academic upgrading programs, and between the perceptions of the three actors are identified.

Topic: Integrating language, life skills, and culture: A look at a new listening series

Presenters: BEGIN, SILVIA
BIANCO, PHILIPPA
MACKIE, ARDISS

This demonstration will illustrate how to use *Suspicious Minds*, the presenters' recent book published by Longman, which integrates listening strategies, life skills, and cultural awareness. The presenters will demonstrate how this material relates to modern second language methodology and how it can be employed in the classroom. A preview of the upcoming books that will complete the series will also be provided.

Topic: National literacy partnership strategy—How the federal/provincial cost-shared program in Alberta works and what it has achieved.

Presenters: ANDERSON, KEITH
NORRIS, TED

The presentation will describe the National Literacy Partnership Strategy federal/provincial cost-shared program as it is carried out in Alberta and will include the following information:

- a) origin, objectives and timeframes of the program
- b) differences between the community/voluntary sector stream and the federal/provincial cost-shared stream of the program
- c) guidelines for proposals submitted to the program
- d) process for the operation of the program in Alberta
- e) overview of projects funded through the program
- f) specific descriptions of a number of the funded projects, including objectives of the project and

benefits to others in similar types of programs in Alberta, by representatives of the programs themselves.

Topic: Literacy and health: partners in practice

Presenter: KEMENY, LIDIA

Everyone needs to be able to read and write. However, in Canada, many people cannot read or write or use numbers very well. For many of these people, reading problems can lead to health problems. People need to be able to receive, understand and USE information about their health and safety. The workshop will examine the findings of Phase One of the Literacy and Health Project research: "Making the World Healthier and Safer for People Who Can't Read." The workshop will then look at Phase Two: "Partners in Practice" a national strategy to incorporate the resources and talents of governments, health care providers and users, and literacy practitioners and students, to ensuring health and safety for people who can't read.

Topic: To discuss the practical application of the "Interactive Reading Process" within the context of a low level English second language classroom

Presenters: FERNALD, FAITH
TURNER, SUE

Presently, many low-level ESL students come to the classroom with little or no education in their first language. The ESL instructor must meet the challenge of helping these students learn not only how to speak English, but also how to read and write in this language. The workshop focuses on the reading process we utilize in the low-level ESL classroom to meet the needs of our L2 students. Using this process in the ESL classroom allows the instructor to design a reading program to meet the students needs. The instructor takes his/her cues from the learner. The process focuses on the learner as a doer rather than the product or outcome. (Fagan, 1987)

The workshop clarifies and simplifies this methodology by presenting a hands-on approach to utilizing this concept in the ESL classroom.

Topic: Materials development with the native learner in mind

Presenters: THUNDERCLOUD, HELEN
SUDERMAN, BEV

This session will include a short history and description of systemic and overt racism in the educational system, and the consequent importance of keeping the needs of native learners in mind when developing programs and material. The workshop will also cover the

benefits to learners and teachers when positive images of Indians/Inuit are promoted within the classroom.

There will be a discussion of the wide variety of possibilities for materials development available to practitioners. These include picture stories, language experience stories, use of newspapers and magazines, real life experience and needs (getting a driver's license, coping with the unemployment system or with the welfare system), and the development of sentence-combining exercises using history, current affairs, and the environment as subjects. Information will be shared about sources of free information and materials.

Topic: The school experience and the learning disabled

Presenter: JOHNSTON, JANET

Awareness of learning disabilities in the English speaking adult illiterate population is increasing. Adults whose learning needs were not met as children sometimes return to school to try again. Too frequently the negative experiences they underwent as children are repeated. These individuals often leave with negligible improvements in their literacy skills and a more entrenched view of themselves as incapable learners. If educators are to assist this population it is imperative that the needs of the learning disabled be better understood, and possible methods of meeting their educational needs attempted. This presentation will address these issues.

Topic: Making sense of spelling

Presenter: MILLAR, ROBIN

Students and teachers alike often feel that working on spelling is a necessary evil. They find spelling manuals and books boring and ineffective in helping students improve their spelling. In the past, many students have experienced spelling lessons as instant and constant failure. On the other hand, there may be students who have never had any spelling instruction at all! They muddle along hoping that their own spelling strategies might work, no matter how ineffective or inefficient these strategies are. There are many misconceptions about the nature of spelling and its value in writing as well as uncertainties about effective memorization methods for learning new words, all of which has given spelling a bad name. Students can learn to spell and anyone can benefit from this spelling experience.

This workshop will focus on practical strategies teachers can use when helping learners work on their spelling. A whole language approach to teaching spelling will be explained plus awareness about different learning styles and their links to spelling approaches.

Topic: What are adult students' expectations regarding teaching practices?

Presenter: BURGHARDT, FRED

Using a modification of Conti's Principles of Adult Learning Survey (PALS), adult students ranging in academic levels from 7-9 grade equivalency were surveyed regarding their expectations regarding teaching practices. The survey indicates: 1) the degree to which adult student practices seem to conform with commonly accepted principles of adult learning; 2) it gives some hints as to practices adult instructors should follow at various levels of instruction.

Topic: Identifying cognitive style characteristics of functionally illiterate adults with application to programming and instruction

Presenters: MAIER, TERRY
LYSYNCHUK, LINDA
GEDDIS, SUE

This paper reports on the second stage of a three-year federal study which seeks to identify the cognitive style of participants in programs designed for functionally illiterate adults and to match these characteristics to program objectives and instruction.

The learning style of applicants to a literacy program was assessed to provide clues to the learning and problem solving competencies which could be translated to counselling and instructional strategies. Using Guilford's Structure of Intellect model, 150 individual and group profiles of cognitive styles were derived.

The session will present and discuss the results and implications for assessment, counselling, instructional design and planning supported by video and annotated bibliography.

Topic: The CCC (Computer Curriculum Corporation) Instructional System

Presenters: MELLAN, JAMES
STEPHEN, PATRICIA

This seminar will deal with computer-assisted learning. Expect to receive a system overview that will tell you about both the curriculum's development and evolution, and the comprehensiveness of the courses—providing over 3,000 hours of instruction. "Power Behind the Screen" will touch on individualization, progress through courses, mastery, branching, management system, reports, applications, worksheets, and achievement gain. A question and answer period concludes the workshop.

Topic: Using distance education to enhance literacy programs in northern Native communities

Presenter: PAULET, DR. ROBERT

This presentation will encourage participants to examine critically the ramifications of directly delivering literacy programs in northern Native communities under (a) an "Education at a Distance" model and (b) an alternative "Distance Education model." Participants will be encouraged to analyze the implications of both models, including their ability to enhance northern Native literacy, while remaining sensitive to current lifestyles and cultures in northern Canadian communities.

Topic: Canada's forgotten literacy learners: The educational implications of cultural diversity.

Presenters: HO, LAURA
DERWING, DR. TRACEY

Throughout its history, Canada's educational community has been faced with sudden and dramatic changes in classroom demographics. As the 1990s begin, we see that the cultural, linguistic and social diversity in our schools, including adult education programs, is continuing to grow at a significant rate. This social change begs for acknowledgement, especially with regard to the literacy requirements of increasing numbers of students who have entered Canada as immigrants or refugees, expressing a whole range of educational experiences.

In this paper, a number of case studies of immigrant adults will be presented, and factors contributing to literacy difficulties identified and discussed. Unlike the literacy difficulties of native speakers of English, those experienced by many second language speakers may be unrelated to previous educational success. The issue of access to adult education will be addressed in light of variety and second language literacy needs, and suggestions for change which focus on a community-based approach to learning will be made.

Topic: Women and literacy in South Asia: With special reference to India

Presenter: SCHUGURENSKY, DANIEL

This paper attempts to present a brief statistical profile of women and literacy in 6 South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in South Asia can be seen from the fact that while literacy rates for women in Asia are rising yet the number of adult illiterates and out-of-school children continue to rise at an alarming rate and the literacy gap between

the sexes is widest in Asia (with the exception of Sri Lanka). The Asian countries house three quarters of the world's illiterates (900 million) of which two thirds are women—women burdened with poverty, disease, low life expectancy, child mortality, low productivity and illiteracy, fighting for bare survival day after day in rural areas and urban slums. Very often they find literacy and education programs, if any, quite unrelated and irrelevant to the realities of their lives. It also attempts to explore and identify some of the structural as well as attitudinal factors that hinder the Asian women in achieving literacy either through formal schooling or nonformal education, both in the case of adult women and out of school female children. In the end, it reviews some of the policy options adopted by a few select countries.

Topic: Dropping in and dropping out: A survey by the Canadian Youth Foundation

Presenter: COOL, JULIE C.

To have a literate society tomorrow, we must examine the youth of today. The Canadian Youth Foundation is conducting a survey of early school leavers who have "dropped in" to literacy programs. There is a real need for information about how an individual admits that he/she has a literacy problem, decides to do something about it, chooses a particular program and whether or not that program meets the individual's needs. It is hoped that this information will enable those involved with youth literacy to develop programs capable of attracting more "drop-ins" and being better suited to their needs.

When the needs of educators, policy-makers, youth-serving organizations and literacy workers are considered, it becomes apparent that one of the most valuable tools they could possess is reliable and detailed information about their clients, young people. In developing an understanding of who these individuals are and what their needs are, educators, policy-makers, youth-serving organizations and literacy workers will be better equipped to help illiterate dropouts who wish to improve their literacy skills. This session will provide the findings of this research on "drop-ins," so that they may gain a better understanding of youth literacy.

Topic: How to increase literacy awareness in your area

Presenters: THIESSEN, JAN
8 OTHERS

The Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL) was formed in the late 1970s. Since that time it has grown into a well-organized group with a membership of

about 500. This presentation will outline the path that the AAAL has followed in its development.

Topic: Read-In

Presenters: STARKMAN, ESTHER
GALVEZ, FEBE

Edmonton's first annual READ-IN provided an opportunity for students and staff (from Edmonton Public and Catholic Schools and the Alberta Vocational College, Edmonton) and members of the community to participate in a celebration of literacy. Individuals were encouraged to read or be read to for at least 15 minutes during the week of September 10th. Total number of Edmonton participants exceeded 443,000. Organizational and media strategies will be informally discussed.

Topic: Liberation and empowerment through education

Presenter: LIZARDI, ARTURO ORNELAS

A discussion of a participatory way from which we could learn about the methodologies, techniques, and implementation of popular education as it is practiced in Latin America. Participants will be asked to reflect on how they can work with the meaning and application of these methodologies in the Canadian world—particularly among the disadvantaged communities as the immigrant, Native, poor, illiterate, etc.

Topic: Adult literacy and ABE in small communities—A model in use in Northern Alberta by Alberta Vocational College, Lesser Slave Lake

Presenter: LAMOUCHE, MICKEY

The Alberta Vocational College (AVC) at Lesser Slave Lake serves a large area in north-central Alberta. Various academic and skill-training courses are delivered in 17 communities including small outreach centres and larger central locations. Upgrading and especially ABE form a major component of the service. A volunteer-tutor project which is centrally coordinated and locally based is also operating.

This presentation will discuss the model used by AVC, Lesser Slave Lake. The panel will describe the administrative structure but focus on the role of instructors and tutor project personnel, with emphasis on community involvement.

Topic: Evaluation of ABL/ABE and workplace literacy programs

Presenter: CHANG, KATHRYN BARKER

The evaluation of adult literacy and basic education programs has become increasingly important as program administrators, participants, sponsors and funders strive for accountability. Although these individuals and agencies are often threatened by the concept of evaluation, the evaluation process may be both rewarding and necessary. This presentation begins with a rationale for program evaluation, overviews current program evaluation initiatives and resources, and outlines a potential process model. Medicine Hat College is hosting a project, funded by the Government of Alberta and the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada through the National Literacy Partnerships Strategy, that will see the development of an evaluation model for adult literacy and basic education programming in the province of Alberta.

Topic: Adult volunteer literacy programs in Alberta: Why they work

Presenters: POLLARD, MARGOT MAIN
DAY, KATHY
MacKENZIE, HELEN
RINGER, GEORGE

Alberta Advanced Education provided funding to establish and support volunteer adult literacy programs in various communities in Alberta. These programs provide tutoring on a one-to-one basis by matching adult students who wish to improve their reading and writing abilities with an appropriate volunteer adult tutor.

Following their establishment and an initial period in which coordinators met informally once or twice a year to share information and concerns about these emerging programs, an association was formalized into a professional development support group called the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA).

The purpose of this session is to show how a successful model can be implemented by bringing together the talents and expertise of coordinators, regional resource people, tutors and learners. Their personal experiences will provide the focus for a panel discussion on building successful adult literacy programs.

Topic: Making the newspaper user-friendly for ABE students

Presenter: FORSYTH, NEIL

Adults with limited literacy skills often avoid the newspaper because they find it overwhelming. It should actually be a valuable tool for keeping abreast of society and knowing how to take advantage of opportunities

in the community. This six-lesson unit is designed to help ABE students find the newspaper useful. Each one-hour lesson helps identify how to glean particular information from different sections of the newspaper efficiently and without anxiety. The material includes handouts designed for distance education delivery (teleconferencing) as well as classroom use. Hands-on activities will demonstrate ways of making reading in the newspaper enjoyable. Discussion will include follow-up activities that can use the newspaper for other ABE instruction.

Topic: Schema theory: Practical considerations for English reading comprehension

Presenter: RAJANI, SONIA J.

This paper deals with the concept of schemata (background knowledge) applied to reading comprehension in English both as a native and foreign or second language. Classroom activities and strategies represent the main focus of discussion. From the perspective of cognitive psychology and the studies in artificial intelligence, reading is viewed as an interactive and constructive process. By means of the interaction between the reader and the text, the reader constructs or reconstructs a model of meaning. Thus the reader's prior knowledge plays an important role in the processing of written text.

Topic: Using peer response groups in the ESL writing classroom

Presenter: BELL, JAMES H.

This practical "how to" presentation will be structured as follows: rationale for writing groups; influential variables—how to create the context, and how to form the groups; how the groups work; a group at work (video and handouts); discussion, criticism, and questions. Instructors should leave the session with sufficient knowledge of this transitional writing group method and enough understanding of the variables involved in successful groups that they can modify the procedure for success in their situation.

Topic: Integrating English as a Second Language speakers into mainstream adult education programs

Presenter: BRUK, ELZA

This workshop was presented at Visions '89, The International Conference for Adult Educators in May 1989. Practitioners in adult literacy programs are increasingly finding themselves dealing with participants who have limited English language skills and varied cultural backgrounds. The English as a second language learner presents a special challenge in adult basic education

programs. As a result, mainstream instructors are looking for ways of effectively incorporating ESL speakers into upgrading and literacy courses.

The aim of this workshop is to explore the ramifications of placing adult ESL participants in adult upgrading programs, and to examine strategies for integrating ESL speakers into mainstream adult educational settings.

Workshop participants will be exposed to a variety of issues relating to this area, with emphasis on the following:

- some theoretical underpinnings of combining the teaching of English as a second language with content-area instruction,
- learning and teaching style differences between ESL learners and mainstream learners,
- instructional techniques that can be used to facilitate the integration of ESL speakers into regular programs,
- perspectives of ESL learners studying in a mainstream upgrading classroom (video).

Workshop participants will also have the opportunity to discuss their observations and solutions to this issue.

Topic: Challenges: Literacy for adults with mental disabilities

Presenters: SANDERS, MAUREEN
ADACHI, THEONE (a tutor)
HART, LORI (a learner)
PETERSON, BRIAN (a support worker from Skills)
WALMSLEY, YVONNE (panel facilitator)

The CHALLENGES project is a two-year demonstration literacy project. The overall intention of CHALLENGES is to support and develop the ability of volunteer tutor programs to meet the needs of adults with mental disabilities and thus to extend the options for special needs learners in Alberta. The purpose of this presentation is to share the progress of the project to date. The background to the project and the need for a program of this kind will be addressed. Also discussed will be such aspects as: assessment, tutor training, working with home support systems, teaching strategies and learner progress. The panel format will allow for presentation of a variety of perspectives.

Topic: The use and abuse of powerful language: An examination of literacy and gender

Presenter: PAULET, ROBERT

An analysis of the effects of powerful language on the literacy opportunities of both genders must focus on more than semantic and syntactic factors. Literacy programs and practices, claiming to value women's per-

sonal experiences, should be designed to empower women and encourage them to put their own interests before the service of patriarchy. Practical recommendations should be related to an objective analysis of current individual and collective needs as well as overt and covert aspirations for greater power.

Topic: Daffodils, snowflakes or maple leaves?
The role of education in development—A case study of Singapore

Presenter: NEEDHAM, MADELINE

The presentation will briefly look at development theories which are concerned with causes of development and underdevelopment in Third World countries. The focus will center on development in Singapore and the field of view will be further narrowed to the adult literacy and skill training programs offered by the Singapore Vocational Industrial Training Board—Basic Education Skill Training (BEST) and Workers Improvement Through Secondary Education (WISE).

The presentation will conclude with results of a current research project which investigates the BEST/WISE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the inservice training offered by AVC staff over a 6-year period. The goal of this research is to look to the future by producing insights into teacher training needs.

Topic: Workplace ESL: Building communications

Presenters: DEFOE, TRACY
FARRELL, RUTH

A case study of a program in a particular industry will be discussed, focusing on two main aspects: the philosophical foundations on which the program was based and the education and social outcomes. The premises on which the program was founded and the basic principles from which work was done with managers, supervisors and workers will also be considered. The intention is not to attempt to establish a model, but to describe the application of the principles in this particular context, and to analyze the results of the approach and the activities engaged in.

Topic: Humor matters: Specially in the classroom (humor as a teaching strategy)

Presenter: LAURIE, BIBI

Victor Borge says "laughter is the shortest distance between two people." Bibi believes that laughter can bring the teacher and learner together to cooperate in the ha-hazardous pursuit of everyday classroom activities. Humor is a ho-holistic strategy that enriches the teaching learning process. This workshop is based on the conviction that two things are necessary for a successful teacher: mastery of the subject matter, and a

sense of humor. Teachers spend many years mastering the subject matter; now it is time to focus on humor. The purpose of this session is to enable participants to take a serious look at humor and understand that humor is not a gimmick or a trick. It is a skill that can be learned and improved. Realize humor is much more than telling jokes.

Three basic questions will be addressed: a) what is humor? b) why should we be serious about humor in the classroom? c) how can we incorporate humor in the classroom? The process of the workshop will be basically interactional. There will be hands-on activities, structured exercises, and guided experiences. The presenter will discuss specific techniques of how to incorporate humor in the classroom.

Topic: The reluctant learner: Reasons for nonparticipation and dropout among B.C. adults

Presenter: THOMAS, AUDREY M.

Twenty-five percent of Canada's adult population is said to be functionally illiterate, yet participation rates in adult basic literacy (ABL) programs are low (5 to 10 percent) and dropout rates are high. The workshop is based on a federal-provincial cost-shared project which examined these themes by reviewing the literature and by interviewing over 60 adults in four different regions of B.C. The results of two related telephone surveys will also be discussed. The findings have implications for recruitment and retention in ABL programs, as well as for further research. Low-literate adults are not necessarily anti-learning, but they may be anti-ABE.

Topic: Teaching the writing process

Presenter: ISENEGGER, JESSIE

The presenter will offer practical suggestions for teaching at each stage of the writing process. She will demonstrate a number of prewriting techniques which help students to generate ideas and then explain her methods of teaching students to revise for clarity. Finally, she will discuss methods of dealing with the mechanics. Also included will be the sequence of writing assignments used in her 10-week remedial writing course and an explanation of the rationale for each of them.

Topic: Reading in English for science and technology: Language, reading skills and content-based instruction

Presenter: RAJANI, SONIA J.

This workshop deals with the teaching of reading skills in the areas of English for Science and Technology

(EST) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), both with regards to academic purposes. The classroom setting usually involves adults or young adults who have reached a high intermediate or advanced level of English instruction and need further knowledge in English in order to satisfy very specific needs and purposes (such as, to become part of the mainstream program of technical and scientific related careers). The reading instruction takes place within a learner-centered course design and it integrates three aspects: language, reading skills and technical content. The ESL teacher works in cooperation with the mainstream instructor(s). The four language skills are integrated through a variety of meaningful classroom activities and the use of authentic materials taken from different sources. Reading is approached as an active and constructive process, where the reader's prior knowledge plays an important role in the processing and assimilation of the written information.

Topic: Needs assessment for advanced ESL

Presenter: BELL, JAMES H.

A needs assessment was conducted to help determine what language skills are most important for advanced ESL students to function successfully at higher levels of education. The session will present the results of the needs assessment. It will be organized to include: problem, question and basic methodology; the results; implications for advanced ESL courses; needs assessment reconsidered; and, questions, responses, criticisms.

Topic: Improving self-esteem and interest in learning a second language

Presenter: WEINGARTNER, JEAN

The key to acquiring a second language is not mastering the rules of grammar but actively using the language to communicate. Therefore, the goal in teaching a second language must be communication. Although this is often the most challenging task a teacher has, it is his or her responsibility to provide activities that encourage students to communicate. In a second language classroom, communication is often stilted, unnatural or nonexistent. This workshop will demonstrate how to bring about real, natural communication that is interesting and fun.

This will be a practical, hands-on workshop for ESL teachers, aides and tutors. It will suggest strategies and methods for improving self-esteem, interest and skills in all areas of second language acquisition.

Topic: Exploring the meaning of science literacy for adults

Presenter: McEACHERN, ASTRID
NASH, ROBIN

What does "science literacy" mean for adults in the highly technologized world of today? Is it useful or even possible to consider science literacy as having some definable parameters? If so, what are these? If not, what are the implications? These questions will be explored in the light of current literature and the directions that educational policy makers appear to be taking. This session is sponsored by Shell Canada Limited.

Topic: Language patterns of Native university students' writing

Presenters: GAMBELL, TREVOR J.
CATHRO, LORRAINE

Many students of Native (Indian) origin come to university with dialectal language patterns. Such patterns influence how these students use writing in their university work. A study is being conducted at the University of Saskatchewan which examines these patterns and influences in and on writing. Information is being gathered on how, why, when and where students use various reading and writing strategies. A socio-psycholinguistic model is being used to guide the reading part, and a writing process model to interpret the writing data. This session will present findings to date, and share examples of students' writing and reading processes. Students' writing samples and information from interviews will be used in the report to conference participants.

Topic: Tutoring to reading style strengths: A preventative approach to meeting literacy needs of marginal readers (school age) through their identified reading preferences

Presenters: DAY, KATHY
McPHERSON, MURIEL

The Pincher Creek and District Partnership Approach to Literacy Project has received funding (1989-90, 1990-91) through the National Literacy Secretariat, Secretary of State and the Alberta Government. In this session interim findings of the project will be reported. The identification and remediation tool used in the project is the Carbo Reading Styles Inventory coupled with a whole language approach to tutoring and teaching.

Topic: Learning with insight and control through interactive teaching

Presenter: FAGAN, DR. WILLIAM T.

At the present time there is considerable focus on promotional campaigns aimed at acquainting the "public" with the seriousness of an illiteracy problem and directed at adult illiterates themselves with the intent that they will seek to improve their reading and writing skills. However, often quoted statistics both in the United States and Canada inform us that the drop-out rate from literacy programs is as high as 50%. Promotional campaigns do not seem to make much sense unless the latter problem is addressed. One factor that seems to be largely ignored in literacy programs is the nature and effectiveness of the methodology—not merely activities or directions, but the procedures or techniques directed specifically at engaging brain and print to promote learning. Learning with insight and control through interactive teaching is a general methodology designed as part of the L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E Program (Literacy Independence Towards Enabling, Responsibility, Attainment, Trust and Excellence) written and taught by the speaker. The focus is on helping learners develop insight and control, especially through analogy. Through interactive teaching, the instructor not only facilitates the continuous learning of the participants but constantly monitors for success and difficulty and uses instances of both to help the learners become partners in enhancing their learning. A description of this program will be presented and examples provided to illustrate applications of the methodology. Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of methodology will also be discussed.

Topic: Literacy education with the mentally disordered: Perplexing problems and promising possibilities

Presenter: DAVIDSON, HOWARD

Are we doing the most we can to make literacy education truly accessible for psychiatric and former psychiatric patients who feel that they could benefit from participating in adult education? Thanks to the support of the National Literacy Secretariat and Highwood School (Alberta Hospital Edmonton) a project is underway to interview these learners and instructors in order to gather information for a handbook that will share their experiences and recommendations with others.

The purposes of the workshop are to inform the conference participants about this project; to share with them whatever information has been gained by that time; and to develop contacts with learners, program coordinators, and instructors who may be able to pro-

vide us with more information. The workshop will have three parts: a role-play which introduces the participants to some of the issues, a presentation which outlines the origins and purposes of the project, and a discussion session which will address participants' particular concerns and will help us to expand our contacts with people who are familiar with these issues.

Topic: Advancing, developing and administering a workplace literacy program: A Canadian case study

Presenter: FOX, TRICIA A.

The realization that a large proportion of Canada's adult population demonstrates a significantly high incidence of illiteracy has led to the emergence of innovative strategies in order to overcome this problem. One strategy is the implementation of literacy peer tutoring in the industrial setting. While literacy training in the workplace is established in the United States through federal initiatives and corporate funding, it is only in the last five years that Canada has developed a similar attitude. Laubach Literacy of Canada has coordinated a co-worker literacy training program in St. Catharines, Cape Breton and Winnipeg. This three-year project, completed in December 1989 has generated some unique information for implementing literacy programs in industry. This presentation overviews the findings of the project: specifically, employer and employee attitudes to the program, problems in attracting learners, the important role of the literacy coordinator in their relationship to learners and company personnel, and recommendations for future programs.

Topic: The definition of literacy and the identification of illiterate populations: A critical assessment of the validity of current approaches and the representation of the problem

Presenters: ZUBOT, MYRA

The research paper will focus on a critical appraisal of literacy research in terms of how literacy has been operationally defined and how researchers have attempted to estimate the magnitude, distribution and characteristics of illiterate populations in Canada. The seminar will also be used to review how the results of research have been reported and how the characteristics of illiterate adult learners have become the basis for stereotyping and "objectifying" the lesser literate. Further, the paper will reveal how the research and its interpretation has resulted in the co-optation by government agencies and business and industry of previously liberal and humanistic programs resulting in today's more narrowly defined vocationally oriented programs. The paper closes with an argument for a

more valid conceptualization of literacy and the development of research and practice based on more rational and appropriate assumptions about the nature of the literacy problem.

Topic: International Literacy Year: An Alberta scrapbook

Presenter: HALL, LINDA

Alberta has been a busy province during 1990. With regional "Chautauquas," the International Book Voyage, coloring contests, spelling bees, suppers, community parades and more, we in the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy feel it's not too early to declare the year a success; we have accomplished what we set out to do during International Literacy Year—to raise public awareness.

International Literacy Year: an Alberta scrapbook would be an ideas-sharing session: what we did, how we did it, what worked, what didn't, how we implemented a province-wide Chautauqua plan, how we moved the Book Voyage from community to community, and how we can keep public awareness high as we launch into the Literacy Decade.

Participants are urged to bring their questions, suggestions, ILY experiences, and ideas for the future. The goal of the session is to put together a scrapbook of 1990 experiences, and also a manual of great ILY ideas that could be widely used and frequently referred to in the next decade. See you there and bring your great ideas.

Topic: The issue of AIDS in ESL and literacy teaching

Presenter: PHAIR, MICHAEL

Basic information about HIV infections/AIDS: national and local initiatives, materials on ESL/literacy and AIDS, and developing teaching strategies to deal with AIDS will be discussed.

Topic: Erminskin Cree syllabic and English literacy program

Presenter: TOOTOOSIS, AGNES
PARRY, BUFF
WILDCAT, CAROL
ROAN, JACKSON

Cree syllabics have been existent to Native people since before the missionaries came. Although the priests and nuns took advantage of learning from them, they never thought of bringing them into the classroom. It has only been the last 10 years or so that the Elders and other interested band members have expressed the need to retain that part of Cree culture. They have

stressed that Cree language literacy be a priority in the Native communities.

Topic: How does adult literacy work? The Northern Alberta experience

Presenter: BRUNERS, DAINA A.

Fairview College's Northern Region Adult Literacy Program is one of Alberta's most extensive literacy initiatives. This research, undertaken in 1989, had two main objectives. First the history, development, and organization of the literacy program was documented. Secondly, the study was used to determine if, and how, the literacy program had impacted the lives of the students and tutors as well as the communities involved. Information for the study was gathered through personal interviews with 75 (present and former) students, 24 tutors, as well as program administrators. The results of this study identified many significant qualitative changes that occurred as a result of the literacy project.

Topic: Learning in the workplace

Presenter: NORE, GORDON

Workplace literacy is not simply literacy "air-lifted" into the workplace. The workplace is a unique culture with its own learning and literacy needs.

The session will examine the implications of what is currently known about illiteracy in the workplace. In addition, it will look at the unique nature of workplace literacy and the need for literacy training within the workplace. The Frontier College/Learning in the Workplace model and the array of services that have been developed to increase literacy within the workplace will be presented. These include: peer tutoring, materials development, diagnostic needs assessment, clear language and design.

Topic: Job satisfaction—Whose responsibility is it?

Presenters: AIRD, KAREN
BURNETT-MURPHY, LYNN

This presentation will explore the need we all have for job satisfaction, i.e., What's in it for me? Topics to be covered include:

- job satisfaction through a needs assessment;
- assessment of personal work values, interests, abilities;
- comparison with our own and other professions; and,
- self-directed approach to exploring new possibilities for job satisfaction.

Topic: A literacy program in New Zealand

Presenters: JORDAN, MIRAZ
HILL, GEORGE
DAY, SE

Informal presentation (discussion) of a New Zealand program.

"Learning Together" Program

Topic: Learning together

Presenter: GOLDBLATT, ANN

This workshop is for all students to get to know each other and to ask questions about the conference.

Topic: Act it out!

Presenter: CORNESS, ROBERT

Learn to say what you are thinking and feeling through drama and have fun at the same time.

Topic: The learner exchange

Presenter: NORTON, MARY

This is a meeting place for learners. There will be hospitality, information, activities, displays and demonstrations. Drop in anytime the exchange is open.

Topic: Feeling good about yourself

Presenter: MARTIN, PAT

How we feel about ourselves is an issue for many adults. In this session, you will learn about ways to improve your self-esteem.

Topic: Reading: We don't make it easy; we make it possible!

Presenters: HOUSTON-KNOPFF, ROBIN
THEUNISSEN, DENISE

Learn some useful tools to help you understand everyday reading.

Topic: Getting along in a group

Presenter: CAVANAGH, RITA

Do you clam up in a group? Here's a chance to learn and practice skills for speaking out.

Topic: Spelling

Presenter: MILLAR, ROBIN

You can get new ideas on how to spell. Bring some of your own writing with you.

Topic: Poetry for fun!

Presenters: GABRIEL, KLAUS
LONGARD, DOUG

Write a poem, take it home, share it with a friend ... In this session everyone will work together to make up some poems. Afterwards the poems will be typed and copied for you to take with you.

Topic: Welfare: What are you entitled to?

Presenter: McNICOLL, SHAUNA

What income benefits should you get if you are taking upgrading and getting social assistance. What can you do if you think you should be getting more benefits?

Topic: Reading with your children

Presenters: FOX, MIKE
BURNIEY, MOLLIE

Learn and practice activities to help your child read, and help yourself at the same time.

Topic: Journeys: How learners and community members run their program

Presenters: CHARTRAND, AVRIL
WALSH, KATHLEEN

Journeys is a literacy program where learners and people in the community decide what will happen. A learner and a teacher will talk about how this works.

Topic: Naming ourselves

Presenter: BROCKMAN, LARRY

Do you like to be called student, or learner? Why? We will talk about what is important to adult learners. How do we help the public understand?

Topic: Looking ahead

Presenter: GOLDBLATT, ANN

This is a final session for all students. What did we learn? What questions did we ask? What do we do next? How can we stay in touch?